

HACKERS

A Play In Eleven Scenes

by
Mike Eisenberg



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1986

uel French, Inc.

MIKE EISENBERG

... is a graduate student in Computer Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where his studies are funded by a Bell Labs Ph.D. Scholarship. He would appreciate feedback on *HACKERS*, his first play; he can be reached over various computer networks as **DUCK@MIT-OZ**.

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HACKERS

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by
Mike Eisenberg



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MANHATTAN PUNCH LINE

Steve Kaplan • Mitch McGuire • Jerry Heymann • Richard Erickson

3891 2 9 1988

Producing Directors

PRESENTS

DEFY

HACKERS

by

MIKE EISENBERG

with

PETER BASCH

TIM CHOATE

MICHAEL CURRAN

SABRINA Le BEAUF

Settings by

Costumes by

Lighting Design by

JANE MUSKY

DAVID LOVELESS

SCOTT PINKNEY

Sound by

Stage Manager

Prod. Manager

GARY HARRIS

NEAL FOX

PAMELA SINGER

Directed by

JERRY HEYMAN

*This production is made possible, in part, with funds from
the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.*

THE CAST

(in order of appearance)

Martin TIM CHOATE*
Chris MICHAEL CURRAN
KJ PETER BASCH
Mary SABRINA LeBEAUF*

SCENE

a basement of a college computer center somewhere in New England

TIME

the present

*Members of Actors Equity Association, appearing without benefit of contract or salary.
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STAFF for HACKERS

Stage Manager. NEAL FOX
Assistant Stage Manager LORA MANNING
Casting Director. HOLLY CARLIN
Master Electrician JAMES L. SCHOENFELDER
Board Operator STEPHEN BURNETT
Sound Operator. CHRISTOPHER BERG
Assistant to Ms. Musky ANNE PATTERSON
Production Assistants MONIQUE ROSS,
BRUCE RACOND
Assistant to Mr. Pinkney. JANICE DAVIS
Technical Director MARC D. MALAMUD
Technical Consultant. JOHN RICE
Set Assistants STEPHEN CALDWELL
KEVIN WEST

STAFF for MPL

Artistic Director. STEVE KAPLAN
Executive Director. MITCH McGUIRE
Producing Directors. JERRY HEYMAN
RICHARD ERICKSON
Development Director FERNE A. FARBER
Press/Audience Devel. Director. GARY MURPHY
Production Manager PAMELA SINGER
Business Manager. TRISHA HANGER
House Manager. RENEE AARONS
Late Nite Manager ROBERT S. JOHNSON
Comedy Corps Manager. ROBIN SAEX
Administrative Assistant. AMY WILLIAMS
Photographer CATHRYN WILLIAMS
Graphic Artist CHARLES BIRNBAUM
Typography. NOT JUST TYPE
Interns. LORA MANNING, JULE GRANT,
SANDELLA DEPONTE, MONIQUE ROSS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(in order of appearance)

MARTIN (23)

CHRIS (17)

KJ (about 27)

MARY (about 25)

Most of the action takes place
in the basement of a college computer center
somewhere in New England.

The time is the present.

NOTES ON PRODUCTION

In general, the scenery and production values for this play need not be very elaborate. The basic idea of the set is that the "computer center" area should be slightly upstage, with an empty area further down. This empty area will serve as Mary's apartment (scene 8), and as the "interview area" (scenes 2 and 5). Naturally, action taking place in the computer center area may extend into the empty space downstage. Alternatively, the area used as Mary's apartment and as the interview space may be a separate upper level set off from the computer center below.

The only aspect of production which might prove problematic is the arrangement of scene 4, between KJ and his computer. Probably the simplest way of handling this scene is to have the actor playing KJ tape his own voice as that of the game; thus the scene is played between KJ, speaking the words which he is typing, and a tape which represents KJ silently reading to himself the responses of the machine. An interesting alternative would be to have an actual working computer onstage, whose screen is additionally projected onto a large screen upstage; or, a little easier, to have a film (or video) representation of the computer screen which is projected onto the upstage screen. In these last versions, the scene might take place in silence (except for those lines which KJ speaks aloud to himself).

Each scene is preceded by several slide projections indicating its "title" (as given in the script) and time. In the original production, an intermission was included between scenes 7 and 8.

SCENES

1. SEPTEMBER: "THE BRAIN AS NEW YORK"
2. OCTOBER: "MARY"
3. NOVEMBER: "THE CHALLENGE"
4. JANUARY: "GAME EPISODE"
5. JANUARY: "MARY II"
6. MARCH: "AMBITION"
7. MAY: "THE NIGHT BEFORE — I"
8. MAY: "THE NIGHT BEFORE — II"
9. MAY: "THE NIGHT BEFORE — III"
10. MAY: "TURING TEST"
11. JULY: "EPILOGUE: GROWTH"

HACKERS

SCENE 1

Slides: "SEPTEMBER", THE BRAIN AS NEW YORK"

The basement of a computer center in a New England university.

The room serves as an underground laboratory for research in artificial intelligence; and as you might expect from the room's location, it is primarily used by those for whom a window would only be a distraction. There are three desks, placed downstage in the lab area. On top of each desk, with its back toward the audience, stands a large LISP machine — a personal computer of tremendous power, used mainly for research. The three LISP machines, going from stage left to right, belong (not as property, but as lab instruments) to KJ, MARTIN, and MARY, respectively. (Naturally, whenever a programmer is seated at a desk, he or she will be facing toward the audience.) Each of the desks is wide enough to hold several manuals and books on its surface in addition to the computer. There are several chairs; and upstage left is a battered old sofa which looks like it's been slept in (not-unreasonable, since it has been slept in). Stage right is a door leading to the rest of the building, and through that to the outside world. There is a clock in the back wall, which for this first scene reads shortly after 2:00 AM.

As the lights go up — there is no curtain — we see CHRIS, a gentle if somewhat naive high school student, sitting at the central computer, typing intently. Pacing behind him, spinning off words the way a proton star radiates light and gesticulating madly with his hands, is MARTIN, a senior in computer science. MARTIN is small, thin, and hyperactive, and just at the moment he is perhaps even more excited than usual.

MARTIN. (*dictating as CHRIS types*) The human brain ... is like New York City. A little miniature New York going on inside your head. Thousands of neurons criss-cross every which way like streets and alleys and byways, and tiny cars — the neural impulses — go zigzagging around, crashing into each other at intersections, getting jammed up here and freed over there, making green lights, missing yellow, cursing red, swerving, dodging, alert, mobile, and yet basically unconscious — like New Yorkers. Every second, millions of bits of information crowd into the Penn Station of the retina. There, they hail a taxi (*tapping on an imaginary taxi partition*) — “Upper cortex and parietal lobe” — and as the meter ticks, these little tourist bits become memories: short term if they can’t get hotel space, while others take up residency as long-term memories. These in turn meet other memories, raise families of ideas, join up into metaphors. Opinions spring up like street gangs and fight for Chinatown. Meanwhile, back at Kennedy Airport, sounds are whizzing into your ear, and these have to be processed by the same giant computer which will give them their luggage when it’s good and ready.

(KJ enters, brandishing an oversized bag of potato chips. KJ is a graduate student, several years older than MARTIN. He has found his niche as a student in this institution; it's likely that he's going to be around here for years to come. KJ is a bit of the prototypical hacker — given to plaid shirts, overweight, bearded, with a taste for science fiction ... also extremely friendly and good-natured.)

KJ. *(holding up the bag of chips)* Hacker chow!

CHRIS. *(to MARTIN)* Is there any more, sir?

MARTIN. I don't know ... you took it all down?

CHRIS. *(still typing)* Every word.

MARTIN. Even what I'm saying now?

CHRIS. Yes, sir...

MARTIN. Incredible! You're incredible! How many words am I up to?

CHRIS. *(typing, then pausing)* Oh, I — I don't...

MARTIN. Hit Control W. *(A pause; CHRIS doesn't understand the terminology. MARTIN goes over to the keyboard and demonstrates.)* Like this. Control ... W.

CHRIS. Oh! Two hundred and nine.

KJ. Only four hundred ninety nine thousand, seven hundred ninety one to go ... *(He offers MARTIN some potato chips.)*

MARTIN. *(taking a few chips from the bag)* Piece of cake! Piece of cake! I've just begun to verbigerate! *(again demonstrating)* Now Control P and you're back in the program.

KJ. *(holding out the bag to CHRIS)* Want some, kid?

CHRIS. Oh, no thank you, I'll grease up the keyboard.

MARTIN. KJ, this is Chris, my typist.

KJ. Pleased to meet you.

MARTIN. Chris is the fastest typist in the world.

CHRIS. It's true.

MARTIN. I met him at the Campus Employment Center. Pure luck. I was looking for a typist even faster than me, and I went down there, and there's this kid, and he says he's the fastest in the world. And by God, he's right!

CHRIS. Oh, I am. I don't know how I do it, either. I just type fast. I think I'm like an idiot savante, except I'm not an idiot.

KJ. *(a pause)* Well, it's good to have a skill...

MARTIN. With this kid doing the typing, getting a half million words into the computer'll be a breeze. I finally have a chance of finishing this project ... *(to CHRIS, who had been listening and not typing)* Now remember, you've got to take down everything I say. Everything. Even these words ... where was I?

CHRIS. *(returning his attention to the keyboard)* Something about New York.

MARTIN. Ah, yes. "The mind as New York." Artificial intelligence is based on just such premises as this: that thinking is reducible in some sense to information transfer and that information transfer can be modelled by any sufficiently complex network, be it the network of neurons in the human brain, the network of circuits inside the LISP machine you're typing at now, or even the network of streets in an imaginary New York. Everybody thinks. I think, I think. *(referring to KJ)* I think he thinks. *(referring to the computer)* I think it thinks. Being

sentient is in.

KJ. *What?*

MARTIN. KJ's going to accuse me of flaming, but I'll tell you something, Chris, I'll tell you something about KJ — something I wouldn't say to his face. Despite all his genius as a hacker ... KJ is still a prisoner of the old, humorless notions of science. Deep down, KJ wants to be a *scientist*. One of the men who administrate labs. Gray little men in white little coats who die of a rare disease and end up with an unflattering bust somewhere in a chemistry building corridor. That's what he wants — but he's wrong! To be a real scholar of AI, you have to be nuts. Crazy. Not coding with a full set of instructions, if you know what I mean. Missing the old "logical shift right"...

KJ. Uh-huh ... And I'm not nuts enough, is that it?

MARTIN. You're nuts, but in a very normal way ... Now take Chris here. He's normal, but in a very nutty way. He's so normal, he's bizarre.

CHRIS. *(still typing, but a little hurt)* Really, sir?

MARTIN. Nothing personal, Chris, but who else would wear a jacket and tie at two in the morning in the basement of a college computer center? What do you think this is, IBM?

CHRIS. I thought this was a real job ...

MARTIN. It is a real job! It is! Artificial thought is the most real thing in the world. Keep typing ...

CHRIS. But you said it was science.

KJ. *(snorts)* Listen, kid, you can't take us too seriously. Nobody else does ... If *you* take us seriously, then we might start taking *ourselves* seriously, and there'd be no

end of trouble ... Ever play an adventure game?

CHRIS. *(a pause)* Who, me?

MARTIN. Yeah, teach it to him. He'll be your subject
(to CHRIS) Type, type ...

KJ. I'll show it to you when you're through.

CHRIS. A game?

MARTIN. KJ, like every other hacker who ever lived, is trying to write the ultimate game.

KJ. Right now it only uses text, but soon I'm going to incorporate videodisc. And then, it'll be frighteningly real. Frightening. *(He does a mock "mad scientist" laugh.)*

MARTIN. Haven't you ever played an adventure game?

CHRIS. Um ... Monopoly. *(The other two laugh.)*

MARTIN. "Monopoly"!

KJ. The man is really an earthling!

MARTIN. You'll love KJ's game, Chris. It's all about the real world.

KJ. The world from which you come ...

MARTIN. In which you dwell ...

KJ. And which we two abandoned oh-so-many long cycles ago. *(He starts doing a tribal drum beat on his desk.)* So many lonnggg ... cycles ... ago ...

MARTIN. I sing of the ancient time, of the ancient age.

KJ. Sing to us. Sing to us of that time.

MARTIN. In the beginning, before the day of the great analytical engine, Man was forced to study things like ... Art History.

KJ. Intro French.

MARTIN. All that Aristotelian bullshit.

KJ. Don't forget George Eliot.

MARTIN. And the wind whistled in the halls of the Engineering Building and everyone thought the engineers were nerds.

KJ. And we were.

MARTIN. And it hurt.

KJ. The slide rule was a badge of shame.

MARTIN. Oh, God, it's true ... I remember my brother... Anyway, all that changed. Somebody invented the computer, and now we're hip. Hackers are the in crowd.

KJ. People want our autographs.

MARTIN. They imitate our walk. It's insane...

KJ. We don't even *have* a walk.

MARTIN. We try to find out what people think we are so that we can be that. It's very difficult. Being externally defined is a heavy responsibility. We read the articles about us in *People* magazine — a few measly paragraphs and then we have to wing it.

KJ. We're bound variables in the function of hip.

MARTIN. Don't get technical.

CHRIS. (*A pause. Tentatively.*) So ... you're working on a game?

KJ. Yes. It's a whole new approach. You see, most of these adventure games are about dungeons and dragons and witches and warlocks and dwarves ... But those things are irrelevant in everyday life. They have nothing to do with us.

MARTIN. Except dwarves.

KJ. Really?

MARTIN. Dwarves. Little guys in underground caverns

who toil all through the night. Doesn't that remind you of somebody?

KJ. *(shrugs)* Anyway. My game breaks new ground. It's going to be my autobiography — my life:story — as told through a video game. People will actually play through the events of my life. By the time anyone finishes playing they'll understand me perfectly. They'll have made all my moves. They'll have lived through all my experiences. In fact, for all intents and purposes, they'll be me.

CHRIS. I'm not sure I want to play ...

KJ. Suit yourself.

MARTIN. Hey, don't worry. I play it all the time, and look at me! I haven't changed a bit! *(He laughs merrily.)*

KJ. It isn't really ready yet. Just text. But once I hook it up to videodisc it'll be incredibly real. I'm going to go back to my father's house in Maine and my mother's place in New York and I'll get some video footage.

MARTIN. Then we can all play KJ's life all the time.

KJ. And *you* said I wasn't nuts!

MARTIN. You're right. I apologize. In fact, I'll go a little further: you're not only crazy, you're dangerous.

KJ. Thank you.

MARTIN. So what do you think, Chris? Are you getting everything down?

CHRIS. Everything you've said, sir ...

MARTIN. *(again squinting at the screen)* I don't believe it. The kid's a QWERTY wizard!

CHRIS. Do you think I could move to that machine, though?

MARTIN. I've never seen anything like it! *(KJ comes over*

to look at the screen.)

CHRIS. That machine has smaller keys. I could go a little faster, even.

MARTIN. Huh?

CHRIS. I was just thinking ...

MARTIN. Oh no, no, you don't want to use that machine. You don't want to *touch* that machine. That machine belongs to a very violent person who kills anyone who touches it.

CHRIS. Really?

MARTIN. A vicious, homicidal lunatic. A twisted, perverted, diabolical genius.

KJ. She's a nice girl.

MARTIN. Anyway, don't touch her machine. She interprets that as a kind of cybernetic rape.

CHRIS. Oh ...

KJ. Once I got wedged on assignment for Gunderson. So I used her machine. When she found out, you know what she did? She hit me with a cricket bat! Believe it? I still have the bruise! *(Rolls up his pants leg.)*

MARTIN. A cricket bat?

KJ. It's offbeat, but it really hurt. See?

CHRIS. *(looking at KJ's leg)* You're kind of out of shape, aren't you?

KJ. That's not the point. The *bruise* is the *point*.

MARTIN. You see, Chris, people around here regard their machines as family. It's like having a little sister with four megabytes of RAM. And you don't touch someone else's little sister.

CHRIS. You don't?

KJ. Sounds like a Ray Bradbury novel: "The Four

Megabytes of RAM".

MARTIN. This is a whole new subculture you're venturing into. A whole new world. We're very aware of that and we want to make your stay here easy and memorable and fun. Because otherwise you could get hurt.

KJ. Like the last six.

MARTIN. He's just kidding. But really, it is a whole new world, and there's so much to explain ... Where do I begin? Let's begin with the Eskimos. The Eskimos up in Alaska have about fifty different words for "snow". See, they live with snow all the time, so they have to classify it. They have words for all the different textures and colors and crystal structures of different kinds of snow. Now *here*, we don't need that kind of range of expression for snow. Here we have dozens of words for "nerd". The nerd, the dork, the grub, the grind, the wimp, the weenie ...

KJ. See, the Eskimos, not having so many nerds, don't have so many words for nerds.

MARTIN. Well, they have no *need*. No need for a nerd word.

KJ. Sure. No weird nerds, no word needs.

MARTIN. In short, no nerds ...

KJ and MARTIN. (*in unison*) No words.

CHRIS. I'm lost.

MARTIN. (*looking at the screen; pointing*) Dork...

(*The lights fade.*)

SCENE 2

Slides: "OCTOBER", "MARY".

A press conference at a local television station. We hear the voices of a crowd of reporters (production note: the reporters' voices in this scene and scene 5 can be taped). A bright, narrow spot of light appears downstage right, and MARY steps into it. She is in her mid-twenties, black, gorgeous, with perhaps a hint of a Jamaican accent. There is an intense, embattled quality about MARY; one gets the feeling that she is perpetually under stress. Right now she is shielding her eyes against the light as she takes questions from the reporters.

REPORTER 1. How do you feel? Nervous?

MARY. Yes, a little, perhaps. I don't really have much ego at stake in this contest. Really. Just the fact that Checkmate 6 got this far, to the nationals, makes me ... content. I'm happy.

REPORTER 2. Jensen didn't want to play against your program. Do you think he was scared to lose?

MARY. I wouldn't know.

REPORTER 2. He said it was against the rules to enter a machine.

MARY. He was wrong.

REPORTER 3. You know, he's had some pretty mean words for you and your computer.

MARY. All my life people have had mean words for me, and I haven't disappeared yet.

REPORTER 4. Uh, Mary? Who's your favorite movie actor?

MARY. I don't watch movies. (*Noises of consternation among the reporters.*)

REPORTER 5. There's an old myth that women don't play chess as well as men. Do you feel you're helping to end that old prejudice?

MARY. Nothing would make me happier than to agree with you, but the fact is I'm not playing in this tournament. A DEC-20 computer is playing Mr. Jensen, not me. I'm not all that good at chess, actually.

REPORTER 6. But you programmed the computer.

REPORTER 5. Doesn't it only sort of do what you tell it to do?

MARY. (*Steps out of the spotlight momentarily. To herself.*) Okay, hold it together, Mary, just hold it together. (*going back into the spotlight*) In a sense. Yes. In this case, I've told the computer to play chess better than I do.

REPORTER 2. I noticed that you call the program "Checkmate 6". Does that mean there were five programs before this one?

MARY. (*Again steps out of the spotlight. To herself.*) No, I started at a googol-zillion and counted down, you asshole! (*back in the spotlight; sweetly*) Why, yes! Five earlier versions...

(*Lights fade.*)

SCENE 3

Slides: "NOVEMBER", "THE CHALLENGE".

The computer lab, shortly after 1:00 AM. The only change since the first scene is that now on the back wall there is a large working display of a chessboard in a late middle-game position. Above the board is written the name "MARY" (she is playing Black); below the board (playing White), "JENSEN". As the lights go up, we see MARTIN delivering another "flame." During the first two thirds or so of his speech, he is downstage, and the lab area itself is dark; at approximately the line beginning with "But six months from today...", MARTIN moves further upstage and we can see CHRIS typing at the central computer and KJ seated at his own computer, half-working and half-listening.

MARTIN. Artificial intelligence has made tremendous strides over the last decade: computers integrate equations, write haiku, play chess, look funny in a gorilla suit and do many other things that people thought they alone did. Very good. But the supreme challenge has not yet been met. The ultimate test. In 1947, Alan Turing proposed this idea: a human being and a computer are placed into two separate rooms — closed rooms. No one on the outside knows which room contains the person and which the computer. Okay? It's like "The Lady or the

Tiger". The person or the computer. Now, each room has a teletype connected to a teletype outside. So if you're on the outside, you can type in questions: what's your name, what's your quest, what's your favorite color ... and you get answers back on the teletype. And your job, very simply, is to tell the two rooms apart. Which is the human being and which is the computer? If you can't tell the two rooms apart after about five minutes, then for all intents and purposes you have a machine that thinks like a person. Q.E.D. You can ask anything you want, of course: ask about sex-life, philosophy, ask "Are you a computer?". "Are you a liar?" Trick questions. Stump the computer. If the program is really worth its salt, it'll answer everything just like a person would. So, for example, you might ask the two rooms, "What's 429 times 657?" Room A gets it wrong, room B gets it right. But maybe the computer deliberately answered with a mistake just to throw you off; and maybe the human being in the other room really figured it out. So you try it again with two new numbers, and this time room A gets it right and room B gets it wrong. Very confusing. So you break down and ask, "Which of you two guys is the computer?" And room A types out, *I'm not*. And room B just types out the funniest Polish joke you've ever heard in your life. And so on...

Most computer scientists think of the Turing Test as a dream. A fantasy. An experiment that'll never be realized. No computer program has even come close to that kind of sophistication. No machine could ever imitate a human being, they say. They laugh. They scoff. They snort. The snuck. Impossible. Unheard of. And they're *right* ... for at least another six months. But six

months from today, I and this LISP machine will together submit ourselves to the Turing Test. I and this machine will be placed into a separate closed area right here — and you, Chris, you and KJ will type in questions over two terminals outside and try to tell us apart. And on that day, the old notions of what constitutes humanity — notions carefully built up by philosophers from Plato to Nietzsche — shall crumble into dust. And a new philosophy of mind shall arise. I, Martin de Koven, armed only with a steady supply of sour-cream-and-onion potato chips and a keen sense of the absurd — I have been working to these two-and-a-half years, building new multiprocessor hardware, creating new super-efficient software, scheming, planning, conniving, seeing the unknown, knowing the unseen, doing the unheard-of, undoing the herd of silly pessimistic ideas that preceded me. And soon, very soon — after you've typed a half-million of my own words into the computer — it will create a semantic network statistically indistinguishable from my own! And there will be two of us! It and me! And then, maybe more of us! And human and computer shall walk together through the silicon valley, and the notion of thought shall be rethought, and a new generation of hackers, overweight and unafraid, as plentiful as the stars in the sky, shall follow me to the Land of Eternal Truth, yea, the land where the bits flow like honey and the line printer lies down with the lambda, and a new nation shall arise and conquer, and I will be at its head.

(MARY enters.)

MARTIN. Yes, I, Martin de Koven, will rule. King, god, wheel, winner: *All Earth shall be mine!* Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha! I might even graduate! Ha-ha-ha! Hi, Mary! (*CHRIS turns to see who has come in.*)

MARY. Keep going, Martin. Power really turns me on.

CHRIS. Are you Mary?

KJ. Martin, I just want to tell you that was the best Ming the Merciless that I ever heard.

MARTIN. Really? Better than the real Ming?

KJ. Oh, much better. Next to you, the real Ming looked merciful.

CHRIS. (*going up to MARY, shaking her hand*) I've heard a lot about you.

MARY. Oh?

CHRIS. You're a hacker too, right?

MARY. Let's just say I program computers.

MARTIN. (*calling him back to the keyboard*) Chris? More words. (*to MARY*) We've been telling Chris here about you for three weeks now. All the canonical Mary stories. Mary this, Mary that ... He's been very anxious to meet you.

MARY. No kidding. I had no idea you guys talked about me so much.

CHRIS. Is it true you once beat up your faculty advisor? (*A pause. MARY looks accusingly at MARTIN.*)

MARTIN. Of course, there have been the usual tall tales...

KJ. Humorous canards ...

MARTIN. Outright lies, in fact ...

MARY. (*to CHRIS*) It's sort of true.

CHRIS. Oh. Did I say something wrong?...

KJ. *(to himself)* Types fast, thinks slow...

MARY. No. Don't worry about *them*.

CHRIS. Anyway, Martin says that next to him you're the best hacker in the world.

MARTIN. Now that's true, Mary, an accurate quote. I did say that, and I believe it. You and I disagree on a lot of things, but fundamentally we have the same mind. You have a slower cycle time, and your bus isn't quite as wide, but you have a much deeper stack.

MARY. You know, Martin, everywhere I go, the first thing people always notice about me is my stack. "Great stack, Mary." That's what the guys at the TV station told me. "How's the old stack, Mary?"

MARTIN. Well ... it did photograph pretty well.

MARY. *(warming up)* You saw me?

MARTIN. Sure.

CHRIS. *(with realization)* Oh, that was you!...

MARY. How about you, KJ? Did you see me on television?

KJ. *(looking up from his keyboard)* Huh, television?...

MARTIN. Mary was on the news. A few weeks ago. I told you about it, remember?

KJ. If a screen doesn't have a keyboard attached, I'm not interested.

MARY. It's been all over the papers ... Checkmate 6. My baby. We're winning, two games to one, you know. And we're gonna go all the way, too. I can see it. I can *sense* it. That foul-mouthed creepy old bastard sits there picking his nose, pushing his pawns ... Oooh, I can't wait!

MARTIN. Not, of course, that you have any ego at stake in this contest.

MARY. They have this huge room set up at the Copley for the tournament. Huge, with green carpet... It's fantastic. There's always a crowd — faces I recognize. Guys I've seen playing chess in coffee shops for a dollar... And I stand there in the crowd, just watching it work. Just watching it. What does it know? And they all look at me... *It moves and they look at me. He moves and they look at me...* I need this one, Martin. There's three years of work in this. And no support, either. My parents; the faculty — no one *talks* to me anymore... *(A pause. She's saying too much, and she knows it.)*

MARTIN. *(softly, sympathetically)* Why'd you come here tonight, Mary? Sort of late for you, isn't it? You're never here...

MARY. I know. *(exhales)* I couldn't sleep. Sometimes I get very happy about what's going on with Checkmate 6, and then I pace around... *(at the chessboard)* This is today's position. Jensen sealed his move and they'll start again tomorrow.

CHRIS. Pawn to king-six, I bet.

MARY. You play?

CHRIS. *(shyly)* A little. Not as well as I type.

MARTIN. Jensen looks pretty strong to me.

MARY. *(sadly)* Yeah. I couldn't sleep. So I thought I'd come in and do a little programming. Get my mind working.

MARTIN. A sure cure... Well, you've come to the right place. This is LISP heaven right here.

KJ. Paradise in thirty-two bits—

MARTIN. Where the hacking is hot and the lights are bright and the air is filtered and the music is non-existent—

KJ. —and your chips come in two flavors: potato and RAM.

MARTIN. (*in a Vegas lounge-pianist voice*) And I'm Martin de Koven, your entertainer for the evening. Along with the magical flying fingers of Chris Carson at the keyboard. Say hi, Chris.

CHRIS. (*after a pause*) Huh?

MARTIN. Close enough... And we'll be playing all your favorite algorithms till six AM... Starting out with the new hit, "You Put My Life in Order", by Bubblesort LaRue...

KJ. Heading for the top of the charts...

MARY. (*amused*) Martin, don't you ever sleep?

MARTIN. Hey, not me! I'm pulling an all-lifer!

KJ. The man is like a No-Doz with legs. Like that little Alka-Seltzer guy. Remember? When we were kids? The walking pill.

MARTIN. Speedy.

KJ. Apt.

MARTIN. I *can't* sleep! How can I sleep? I'm too successful! I'm a winner!

MARY. You're still doing the Turing test thing?

MARTIN. Of course! Why do you think I've got Chris here typing in every word that I say? Because I *like* paying money for some high-school kid to sit at my terminal? No offense, Chris.

CHRIS. (*typing mechanically*) I know—

MARTIN. I'm onto something big here.

MARY. Yeah, big, like squaring the circle.

KJ. Didn't Minsky do that?

MARY. Martin, it's impossible.

MARTIN. Impossible is a word I never use except in this sentence.

MARY. But it *is*! Martin, listen to me. Okay? This is Mary and her incredible staek talking. Certain projects are simply beyond the realm of computer science.

MARTIN. Makes you nervous, doesn't it?

MARY. Nervous? Me?

MARTIN. Yes. Because fundamentally, Mary, you want to believe there's something magic about human intelligence. You're just like everybody else.

MARY. *Bullshit*. I don't want to see you wasting your time, that's all.

MARTIN. When I could be doing something important? Like a chess program? (*MARY glares.*) Look, Mary, we all put our own personalities into this. KJ's got his game, and you've got Checkmate 6, and I've got the Turing test. We're all just having fun.

KJ. (*bent over his keyboard, half to himself*) Whee...

MARTIN. (*only partly in fun*) Shut up...

MARY. I thought we were doing science.

CHRIS. Yeah, me too.

MARY. Part of which is knowing your limitations. If you keep going with this project, you're going to break your mind over it, Martin. You can't solve all the problems of AI at once.

MARTIN. Well, we'll just have to see, won't we? You'll be here in May when we put it to the test. Ask a question and see if you can tell us apart, me and the machine.

MARY. What — is that a challenge? You're challenging me?

MARTIN. Yeah.

MARY. One question?

MARTIN. (*nodding*) You better think up a good one.

MARY. You better write a good program.

MARTIN. I will... (*back to CHRIS*) And now, let me turn to the subject of tonight's 1 AM flame: Truth, with a capital T. What is Truth?...

KJ. (*suddenly, to his machine*) I don't believe it! You *compiled!* (*He leaps up and kisses the screen.*) Mwaah! I love you!

MARTIN. Or more accurately— (*to CHRIS, who turned to watch this*) Type, type — Does Truth exist?

SCENE 4

Slides: "JANUARY", "GAME EPISODE".

The computer lab, shortly before 1:00 AM. The lights in the room are dimmed, and KJ is alone, playing his adventure game. The "dialogue" as shown is what is taking place on KJ's computer screen, except where indicated that KJ is speaking to himself; see also the Notes on Production at the beginning of the play.

GAME. You are in your bedroom, lying in your bed, staring at the ceiling. There is a crack in the ceiling that looks like the side of a man's head. The wallpaper around you is bright green and yellow, with a design of little toy soldiers. A jigsaw puzzle is half-completed on the floor and some of the pieces are missing. Maybe the missing pieces are under the bed. There are games and toys and little books scattered everywhere. Outside your room you can hear noises.

KJ. (*aloud to himself, softly*) Noises, huh? Noises outside my room? (*He types.*) Are they voices?

GAME. It sounds like it.

KJ. My mother?

GAME. Maybe.

KJ. Is the bedroom door closed?

GAME. Yes, your door is closed.

KJ. Get out of bed.

GAME. You are standing in the middle of your bedroom. Games and toys are scattered around the floor. You have a kiddie Scrabble set and Monopoly and a whiffle ball bat. An inflated Popeye punching bag is standing in the corner. Your father bought it for you, but you never use it.

KJ. It's scary.

GAME. Yes, it has a scary face. You've turned it away from you, toward the back wall.

KJ. (aloud) I remember that... Dad got upset when he saw that ... (typing) Go to the door and listen.

GAME. You are standing behind your bedroom door, listening to the voices outside. Your night light is on next to your bed but otherwise the room is dark and quiet and your heart is pounding. Outside, the voices are talking.

KJ. What do they say?

GAME. It is your mother. It sounds like "going away." She's saying she wants to go away. Also something about painting ... or fainting ... "Away." She said it again. "It's time to get away."

KJ. Will she take me with her?

GAME. I don't know.

KJ. Who is she talking to?

GAME. I don't know.

KJ. Is it my father?

GAME. No.

KJ. What else are they saying?

GAME. Nothing ... Your mother just heard the floor creak near your door. She knows you're awake. It sounds like she's whispering something. There's a little pause ...

you can hear the front door closing.

KJ. Take the bat and go out of the room.

GAME. You're not supposed to be out of your room this late.

KJ. Take the bat and go out of the room.

GAME. You are standing in the living room in your pajamas, holding your whiffle ball bat. The living room has a large sofa with deep maroon upholstery and two large chairs of the same color. There is a mahogany coffee table with ashtrays on it and some half-empty packs of cigarettes. There is also a letter on the table, near one of the ashtrays. It's addressed to your father, unopened. Now you can hear your mother returning to the living room from the direction of the front door.

KJ. Take the letter.

GAME. Letter taken. Your mother enters the living room. She looks angry with you.

KJ. Say: I couldn't sleep.

GAME. Done. (a pause) Your mother hits you.

KJ. (He looks astonished. Did that happen? When did he program it? He paces about the floor, upset, then returns to the machine.) Quit. Logout.

MACHINE. Game session 1244 completed. Logout time, January 1, 12:45 AM.

KJ. (aloud, to himself) January first? Is that what it is? New Year's Eve? (He types.) Daytime.

MACHINE. January 1, 12:46 AM.

KJ. (aloud) And nobody's here... Of course. Oh, God. (a pause) I hate this fucking, fucking earth.

SCENE 5

Slides: "JANUARY", "MARY II".

MARY giving a second press conference. The stage is set as in scene 2.

REPORTER 1. How does it feel to be champion?

MARY. *(Smiling; she's gotten a little better at this.)* Ask the DEC-20. The computer won the games.

REPORTER 2. But don't you feel a little bit proud?

MARY. *(her smile widening, charmingly)* Yeah. I — I do...

REPORTER 3. Your school must be very proud of you.

MARY. I hope so.

REPORTER 1. What now, Mary? A rematch? Or on to bigger matches?

MARY. This June in Prague the next elimination for the world championship will begin. As you know, the winner of that tournament will get to play Gary Kasparov in Moscow. I'm announcing to you here... today... that I intend to enter Checkmate 6 in the tournament. Checkmate 6 is able to learn from its errors so it's an even better player today than it was three months ago.

REPORTER 4. Good enough to beat Gary Kasparov?

MARY. I think so. Kasparov's record against Mr. Jen-

sen is twelve and five; my record overall is— *(She halts.)*
Checkmate 6's record against Mr. Jensen is seven and four, which is about the same.

REPORTER 2. You're going to bring the title back to America, then?

MARY. *(too quickly)* Oh, who cares? *(catching herself)* I mean — I'm sorry ... Well, in a sense, yes, back to America... Uh, I think some of the RAM chips were built in Japan, so, uh, in a way ... *(She seems confused.)*

(Lights fade.)

SCENE 6

Slides: "MARCH", "AMBITION".

The computer room, sometime before 3:00 AM. CHRIS is pacing about the room, talking to himself. Lying on the sofa, huddled underneath a blanket — although at present unseen by either CHRIS or the audience — is KJ.

CHRIS. People's brains ... are like New York City. Like a big urban city sitting there in your head. There are these cars and they ... smash into each other whenever you try and think. Except Central Park doesn't have cars in it, so there's no thinking allowed there. And then, and then, there's Brooklyn, where no one *ever* thinks ... so ... so ... (*KJ has awakened, and has poked his head out from underneath the blanket to peer quizzically at CHRIS.*) Lemme start over. New York is like a brain with buildings in it. And you're, like, the mayor of your brain. And—

KJ. (*As he speaks, CHRIS gives a start.*) Are you on drugs?

CHRIS. (*clutching his heart*) Oh, gosh. KJ.

KJ. (*laughing*) Are you okay?

CHRIS. You scared me. That voice out of nowhere ... Have you been here — were you ... (*a sudden realization*)

KJ, do you sleep here at night?

KJ. Sometimes.

CHRIS. Oh ... Anyway, um, what I was doing here ... if you were wondering, I was just trying to talk like Martin. I was practicing talking like Martin. You know ... *(a patient, genial silence from KJ)* Just trying to say the same things he says.

KJ. Uh-huh ...

CHRIS. KJ, do you mind if I ask you a question? It's sort of off the subject.

KJ. That's allowed.

CHRIS. It's about Mary, actually ... How long have you known her?

KJ. Three years. I've only really spoken to her over the past year.

CHRIS. Oh. *(a pause)* Does Mary — I mean, have you ever seen her, heard her say anything...

KJ. She doesn't have a boyfriend, if that's what you're asking.

CHRIS. No, I — *(He's very embarrassed and miserable.)* I wasn't asking to find out ... She doesn't? Really?

KJ. Not as far as anyone knows.

CHRIS. *(after a pause)* Have you ever heard her say anything about me? ... Oh, gosh, I want to die.

KJ. Hey, just calm down, alright? Why don't you ask her out? If that's how you feel, if you like her, then take the first step. Get Mary alone in some quiet setting, walk right up to her, look her in the eye, and ask her out.

CHRIS. Will that work?

KJ. No, no chance. But after she turns you down, you might not like her quite as much.

CHRIS. *(sadly)* Oh ...

KJ. Of course, who knows, really ... You might ask for

a date, and she might say yes. People aren't deterministic. Women especially. They're pseudorandom. So maybe she'll say yes. No particular reason. She just might agree.

CHRIS. (*vaguely hopeful*) Just for the heck of it.

KJ. Exactly. Mary's a strange girl. She makes up flowcharts; she works in the daytime ... Who knows what her taste is like?

CHRIS. If only I could get up the courage to ask her.

KJ. Now, me — I don't hack romance. I've tried, but it's just not something I'm very good at. Actually, I think it's a little boring. And it's time-consuming, too. I mean, there's only a few things you can really *do* at three in the morning, and to my mind, programming is the most exciting choice.

CHRIS. Well, that's interesting, KJ, because that brings me back to what I was doing here. I've decided I want to be a hacker, too. That's why I'm trying to talk like Martin does. I want to be like Martin. Just like him ... and you. I want to learn to say the things that hackers say.

KJ. That's why you were here? Saying those imbecilic things?

CHRIS. Yeah. I want to be part of this community.

KJ. Well, you're doing it all backwards. You can't go around talking. To be a hacker, you have to hack. All the time. Night and day, you've got to be at that computer. The jargon will just *come* as a natural result of the mental deterioration that accompanies programming. It'll just happen.

CHRIS. I know. I thought of that, too, see? I got this

book ... *(He hands KJ a book)*

KJ. "Introductory BASIC"? "Introductory BASIC"?
What are you, nuts? Where did you get this thing?

CHRIS. It's for learning programming.

KJ. *(almost shouting)* You're going to learn BASIC?
That's the kind of hacker you're going to be?

CHRIS. The man at the store said it was a good book.

KJ. BASIC?!

CHRIS. *(frantic)* He said!

KJ. Chris, learning BASIC is like learning accordion. It's just not something that people should ever admit they want to do. Now, I don't want to see you reading this thing, ever ... Okay? *(KJ places the book on his desk and retrieves a phone-book-sized LISP manual.)* If you want to learn programming, then here. Take this LISP manual home and read it. *(He hands CHRIS the manual.)* This is your Bible. LISP. *(He retrieves a few more bound volumes from his desk and stacks them on the manual in CHRIS's hands.)* And here are some updates. *(adding more)* Oh, and take this, too. It's about the window system, it'll help you do graphics.

CHRIS. *(distressed)* All this?

KJ. *(rummaging near his machine)* There may be a couple of other things here ...

CHRIS. Does this stuff work? *(KJ looks up sharply.)* I mean ... You know ... Can I make it say hello?

KJ. *(Gives a dour little laugh.)* I don't believe this. You've spent the last six months taking down the words of the greatest hacker in the universe, and you're talking about

making a computer say hello?

CHRIS. (*gesturing to the BASIC book*) They said in there it was a good first project. I just want to start small.

KJ. In computer science, the only way to start small is to start big and *end up* small. I think that's profound.

CHRIS. But what should I do then? As a project.

KJ. Oh ... Anything! Make the computer make music. Make the computer make jokes. Make the computer say hello, if you like ... But make it *really want* to say hello.

CHRIS. Isn't that hard?

KJ. It's impossible. (*his "madman" laugh*) Ha-ha-ha! But it's just our way. (*seeing CHRIS's near-dejection*) Hey. You want Mary to like you, don't you, Chris?

CHRIS. Will Mary like me if I learn LISP?

KJ. (*a baldfaced lie*) Yes.

CHRIS. But you know LISP and she doesn't like you...

KJ. (*a bit taken aback*) That's true. Yes.

CHRIS. And Martin knows LISP and she doesn't like him..

KJ. Look, I can't account for everything. I don't understand Mary any better than you do. But I tell you what I *will* do: next time Mary comes around, I'll say some nice things about you. Okay? Or better yet, let's not leave this to *my* incompetence: if you're here, and she comes in, I'll just leave you two alone for a while. And you can ask her out yourself. Deal?

CHRIS. (*a bit tentatively*) Yeah.

KJ. Now start reading. This (*referring to the manual*) is the true road to happiness right here. Take it from me. (*CHRIS obediently begins reading the manual; KJ, in the mean-*

time, picks up the BASIC book and leafs through it. KJ snorts with contempt.) "For-next"! Too much! "Gosub"! "Gosub 3000"!

(MARTIN enters, unnoticed by the other two; KJ is turned away from him. MARTIN quietly peeks over KJ's shoulder, and sees what his friend is reading.)

KJ. Hahaa! "Read/Data"! This is great! This is really—
(He turns around and sees MARTIN.)

MARTIN. (tapping the book) We're reading BASIC, are we? It's a good choice, KJ. I hear it does arithmetic.

KJ. I wanted to get back to my roots.

MARTIN.. I'll buy you an abacus ... Hi, Chris. Sorry I'm late.

CHRIS. Oh, that's okay ...

MARTIN. You ready to work? Is the program all set up?

CHRIS. Yeah.

MARTIN. (as CHRIS starts typing) Okay, let's go, we're behind. Thirty thousand words this week, and there isn't a minute to waste. We've got to move, we've got to get moving. Time is money.

KJ. False. (a pause as the other two stare at him) What you just said.

MARTIN. Hmm?

KJ. "Time is money." That's just false. Time is obviously *not* money. They're completely different. Time is a dimension, money's an abstraction.

MARTIN. But time is a very abstract dimension.

KJ. But money's a very demented abstraction.

MARTIN. Exactly, but in fact there's an instructive tension between time as dimension and money as abstraction.

CHRIS. (*typing gleefully*) I'm getting it! I'm getting it all!

MARTIN. Which philosophical point leads me into tonight's talk. A little sermonette for the brain-damaged — a meta-metaphor for the under-understanding. The topic is this: "Life is like a list. And as you CDR'd down the years, what happens when you reach that big NIL waiting at the end for all of us?" I've devoted a lot of thought to this over the past twenty minutes, and what I have to say may astound you ...

(*MARY enters; she is wearing a fur coat of which she is obviously very proud.*)

MARY. (*cheerfully*) Hi, guys!

CHRIS. (*even more awestruck than usual*) Wow ...

MARTIN. Well, well ...

MARY. Mink. Mink.

KJ. What becomes a legend fastest?

MARY. Just a couple of endorsements ... you'll see me posed next to a Macintosh in the upcoming issue of *Popular Computing* ... I'll be standing next to the computer doing one of these. (*She demonstrates a pose.*)

KJ. (*dour*) Swell. Great. (*CHRIS shoots him a reproachful look.*)

MARY. And then in *Byte* I'll be recommending some dopey home video game ... I can't remember the name ... "Intergalactic Outer Space Amazons," or something like

that ... You would like it, KJ. It's your kind of literature.
(as she hangs up her coat) Modelling is easy....

KJ. Did they make you wear clothes? (MARTIN giggles.)

CHRIS. KJ!

MARY. No, let them, let them... They're just jealous.
Aren't you boys? Aren't you just jealous?

MARTIN. Yeah, a little.

KJ. (muttering) I'm not. Not me ...

MARY. It's okay. I don't mind. I can understand it. If I were in your position, I'd be jealous, too.

CHRIS. (totally sincere) You're very generous.

MARTIN. When are you going to Europe?

MARY. Oh, that's a way off. The tournament in Prague doesn't start till June. I'll have to leave at the end of May, of course, to supervise the installation of the program. But it'll work out. Triple-AI is paying for the whole thing.
(musing) Yes, indeed ... We're gonna go all the way..

CHRIS. (almost in terror) Who?

MARY. Checkmate 6 and me ...

CHRIS. Oh.

MARY. "World champion." I like it. I like the sound of it.

CHRIS. It has a beautiful sound ...

KJ. (disgusted at CHRIS's obviousness) Chris ...

MARTIN. I do hope, Mary, that your success in the so-called "real world" hasn't blinded you to the true, deep issues of AI — issues soon to be resolved in this very room.

MARY. Your Turing test?

MARTIN. Maybe you're doing ads in *Byte* magazine,

Mary, but once I'm done with this program, I'll show you what *real* stardom is like. I'll be on the cover of *Rolling Stone*! Or even on the Tonight show!

MARY. Maybe they'll put your computer on the show. After all, if the program works, there won't be any difference between you and the computer, right?

MARTIN. Well ... I'm a little more photogenic ...

MARY. You know, I was thinking about this project of yours, and it occurred to me, Martin ... You may be the only person in the world who could actually pull this off. If anyone could make a computer program out of themselves, you could. And you know why? Because you're the most cerebral person I know. You're the perfect choice. Only someone so completely language-defined could possibly make this work. Sometimes I think I could even program you myself.

MARTIN. (*thoughtfully*) Really ...

MARY. (*with a shrug*) But it's still too complicated. It's not a problem of philosophy — only technique. You can't bring it off, Martin.

MARTIN. Yeah? Well, I hope you've thought up a good question, Mary, because in just two months you'll be eating your words. I'm the best. I'm the crown prince of the new-wave hackers, and this time I'm going for global glory!

MARY. See? Listen to you!

MARTIN. And maybe after I'm done — after I'm done programming *me* — I'll take a few months off and program *you*! How would you like *that*? I'll bet I could do you with even less memory! (*MARY laugh merrily.*) I'll bet I could do you on a Commodore 64! (*During the past*

exchange, CHRIS and KJ have made eye contact, and KJ has silently indicated to CHRIS that he will fulfill his earlier promise.)

KJ. (He now taps MARTIN on the shoulder. Interrupting.) Martin ... I just got ... um ... I just got a sudden yen for potato chips.

MARTIN. Good. It's good to have ambition. (turning back to MARY) Listen, Mary—

KJ. Why don't you come upstairs to the machine with me and help me get the chips?

MARTIN. I'm flaming, I'm in the middle of an argument (to CHRIS) Are you getting this all?

CHRIS. Sure, Martin. Only your side of it, though.

MARTIN. It's the only side worth getting.

KJ. It'll just take a few minutes. Two minutes.

MARY. KJ, don't you know how to work the potato chip machine?

MARTIN. (irritated) What is this — you need help pulling the right knob? It's a very user-friendly potato chip machine, KJ. It's designed for the novice, and God knows, you're no novice! (seeing KJ's serious expression, after a pause) Okay. We'll go ... For how long?

KJ. Couple of minutes.

MARTIN. I'll be gone a couple of minutes, Chris, but when I come back we've really got to get some words into that machine.

CHRIS. Okay.

KJ. (As he puts on his jacket, he takes CHRIS aside.) I'm going to give you two minutes. Okay? Two minutes. Ask her. Get it over with.

CHRIS. (getting more terrified by the second) Right.

KJ. Don't *stall*, now, because that's idiotic. Just ask her out ... Will you do that? You'll ask?

CHRIS. Yeah.

KJ. Promise? (*CHRIS nods, shivering; KJ turns to MARTIN and strides toward the door.*) Okay, lets go!

MARY and CHRIS. Bye ... (*KJ and MARTIN exit*)

MARY. That was weird.

CHRIS. Yeah.

MARY. Maybe he wanted to talk to Martin alone ... KJ is a strange boy. Don't you think? (*CHRIS, too scared to talk, nods.*) I could see how jealous he was of my program. He's a strange boy. He sleeps here, you know. (*She resumes her work at the keyboard.*)

CHRIS. (*There is now a long pause as he tries to find the nerve to say something. He gets up from his chair, paces a bit, sits back down, gets up, etc. Finally.*) Mary?

MARY. Yes?

CHRIS. I'm learning LISP.

MARY. (*offhandedly, not looking away from her work*) Why not BASIC? It's easier.

CHRIS. (*He is thrown into total confusion by this; for a moment he looks over toward KJ's terminal as if expecting help from that quarter. Another long pause ensues.*) So, when are you going to Prague?

MARY. Couple of months.

CHRIS. (*after a pause; desperate to make conversation*) It's a beautiful city.

MARY. Prague?

CHRIS. It isn't?

MARY. I've never been. (*She's beginning to understand the essential outlines of what's going on.*) But I'll send you a

postcard when I go. Would you like that?

CHRIS. Oh. Yes. Very much.

MARY. *(smiles)* You go to high school around here?

CHRIS. Yeah. At Emerson. I'm a senior.

MARY. It's a hard schedule, isn't it? *(elaborating)* I mean, it's 3-AM. You're here in the middle of the night, and then you have to be in school the next day...

CHRIS. Oh, I don't mind. I get to sleep during class. *(MARY laughs, which emboldens him a bit.)* It's true! Anyway, I like being here.

MARY. Really.

CHRIS. It's a fun job. I get to listen to Martin and KJ, and I'm learning an awful lot.

MARY. *(a bit skeptically)* Mmm.

CHRIS. All I have to do is type everything Martin says. That's easy, and I get to hear all the conversations.

MARY. Careful you don't learn too much.

CHRIS. Martin talks about such wonderful things ... The meaning of meaning, thinking about thinking, thinking about knowing, knowing about meaning ... I don't know what it means, but I'm impressed.

MARY. *(not really wanting to pursue this)* What are you going to do after you graduate?

CHRIS. Oh, I'm not sure ... I've applied to college here, and if I get in, maybe I'll go. I was never much for science, but I like hearing people talk about computers.

MARY. It's hard work here.

CHRIS. I think I can do it, though. Maybe not as well as Martin, or you ... but I'll manage ... *(hearing MARTIN's laughter outside)* Oh.

MARY. What is it?

CHRIS. They're coming back ... Listen, Mary?

MARY. Yes?

CHRIS. *(a pause)* Uh ... nothing.

(KJ and MARTIN enter in high spirits, their arms laden with bags of potato chips.)

MARTIN. I think we must have bought every kind of potato chip in that damn machine.

KJ. An astonishing variety ... You should see it.

MARTIN. Mary, there's been an exponential rate of progress in potato chip technology. It's a new, exciting field.

KJ. We're way ahead of Japan.

MARTIN. Look at the selection! *(going through the bags)* There's sour cream and onion ... bar-b-Q style ... garden salad ... rocky road, which is truly disgusting ... *(He spreads out the bags near his terminal, as KJ takes CHRIS aside.)*

KJ. Well? Yes or no? What did she say?

CHRIS. Sort of ... yes.

KJ. *(shaking CHRIS's hand)* Congratulations!

CHRIS. No ... I didn't ask, really.

KJ. You didn't ask?

CHRIS. Not really...

KJ. *(after a pause, smiling)* You're going to make a great hacker.

(As KJ returns to his desk, the lights fade.)

SCENE 7

Slides: "MAY", "THE NIGHT BEFORE — I".

The computer room, about 9:30 PM. An additional monitor and keyboard have been set up near MARTIN's machine; this will be the set that MARTIN eventually uses during the Turing test. Also, a second keyboard and a dot-matrix printer have been attached to KJ's machine. There is a folded office-style divider upstage. As the lights go up, we see CHRIS sitting at the new monitor while KJ and MARTIN are standing beside KJ's computer; KJ is using one of the two keyboards. KJ and CHRIS — we'll see as the scene progresses — are excited and animated; MARTIN, on the other hand, seems uncharacteristically quiet and depressed.

KJ. Are we connected?

CHRIS. I think so ...

KJ. *(typing)* Can you read what I'm typing?

CHRIS. *(reading)* Yeah! It's all coming through! ...
"There was young hacker named Ada, Who stored up a year's worth of data; She ..." *(He continues to read.)* Oh, my God. Did you make that up?

KJ. Long time ago. Try the other direction.

MARTIN. Type something. Anything.

CHRIS. Um ... okay. *(He types; the printer responds.)*

MARTIN. *(reading from the printer)* "Testing, testing."

KJ. "Testing, testing"?

CHRIS. It was all I could think of.

KJ. Well, it looks like we're ready for tomorrow.

CHRIS. Oh, gosh, I can't wait!

KJ. How do you feel, buddy? This is it!

MARTIN. *(sullen)* I feel like I'm floating on a little pink cloud.

CHRIS. *(not catching MARTIN's tone)* Me, too!

KJ. Now, here's how we'll work it: you'll sit at this terminal tomorrow *(He indicates the new terminal.)* and Chris and I will have set up this divider down the middle of the room *(referring to the divider upstage)*. So we can't see each other.

MARTIN. Right.

KJ. Then we'll type in questions from our keyboards over here, and you and the computer will answer back over the printer. Simple.

MARTIN. Isn't it.

KJ. Ah... *(He produces a pair of bright red earmuffs from his desk.)* You'll wear these during the test. That way you can't hear us talking outside. And I got you that membrane keyboard, so we can't hear any typing. As long as you're quiet we won't be able to hear you. You just can't do anything *noisy*, like talking or screaming ...

MARTIN. Or, vomiting or committing suicide.

KJ. Exactly.

CHRIS. If you kill yourself during the test, does the machine win?

MARTIN. Yes.

KJ. Hey, Martin, why don't you give us a little preview of tomorrow? You know — start up the program so we can see how it works?

MARTIN. No.

KJ. Come on, just a few little questions ...

MARTIN. Nobody talks to this computer until tomorrow. Besides, there's still about five thousand words to enter into it.

CHRIS. Anytime you want to start, Martin. There's plenty of time. You'll do five thousand words before two in the morning! ... Wow. This is the first time I've ever been present at a historical event!

MARTIN. (*dour*) Your dad never took you to a ball game?

CHRIS. (*a little uncertain*) A few Red Sox games, but...

KJ. (*gesturing to the machine*) Can't we just see?

MARTIN. (*almost shouting*) I said *no*, KJ! ... (*more quietly*) I've been testing it myself. It looks good ... Set up the program, Chris.

KJ. (*Leads MARTIN aside.*) Hey, come here ... (*when the two are off to one side*) What's the matter with you? What is it? You're less than a day away from the biggest win in history.

MARTIN. (*glum*) Yeah.

KJ. Why are you acting like such a loser?

MARTIN. I've been testing the program. Alone.

KJ. So?

MARTIN. All kinds of tests ...

KJ. You said it looks good.

MARTIN. It does. Very good ... KJ, do you remember a couple of months ago when Mary said to me that I was the perfect choice for this project?

KJ. No.

MARTIN. (*He seems pained at the memory.*) She said I was the most cerebral person in the world. That I was nothing but language.

KJ. Yeah, I remember.

MARTIN. I didn't think about it at first, but ... KJ, what if this works? What if this program works? What if I go in there tomorrow and you can't tell the difference between me and a machine?

KJ. You'll have succeeded.

MARTIN. But what does that say about me, about Martin?

KJ. It means that you're the greatest hacker in the world.

MARTIN. But a total failure as a human being.

KJ. Same thing.

MARTIN. (*irritated*) KJ ...

KJ. Look, Martin. What is it you want to be? What do you want to think that a computer couldn't think? We're all machines. You happen to be a very smart machine. You should be proud.

CHRIS. (*calling*) Ready!

KJ. If it's any consolation ... you're one of my very favorite machines.

MARTIN. Thank you, KJ. I'll always treasure that remark in my memory. (*realizing what he's just said*) Oh, God ... (*with an air of resignation, to CHRIS*) Okay, five thousand more words. Let's see ... I don't know what to talk about ... Somehow I'm not in a very talkative mood...

(*MARY bursts in with a huge grin. She's wearing a pair of sunglasses and a fashionable dress, and is carrying a silly little pen-*

nant that says "Checkmate 6".)

MARY. Hello, boys! It's PARTY TIME!

CHRIS. Mary!

MARY. My flight is tomorrow and I'm all packed. I'm ready to go into battle tomorrow!

MARTIN. So are we.

CHRIS. You look ... great.

MARY. Well, thank you! At first I thought it was too revealing, but then I decided, hey, what the hell, reveal... Anyway, I just came in to wish you luck before the big day. I guess I should congratulate you, Martin. Whether your program works or not, it's a magnificent try. I have to admire your ... *(She pauses, searching for the right word.)*

MARTIN. Body.

MARTIN. No.

MARTIN. Chutzpah.

MARY. Yes.

MARTIN. Well, congratulations to you, too, Mary. This whole room is very proud of you.

CHRIS. Oh, yes, very proud.

KJ. Seeing you in that dress, we're even a little more than proud.

MARTIN. Give the Russians hell, Mary.

MARY. *(moved)* You guys have been so supportive. You've been wonderful. No one else in the whole school even *says* anything to me, but you've ... I feel so good! I feel incredible! This is a brand-new experience ... Wow! I've got to celebrate. There hasn't really been a chance to celebrate this whole thing. I've got to go out tonight. Do

some dancing, partying. Use up some energy. Anyone feel like going out? *(The men shift uneasily — CHRIS in particular.)* Come on! Anyone want to go out on a date?

CHRIS. *(to himself)* Oh, gosh ...

MARTIN. We've actually got some work ... to do...

MARY. Oh, come on, Martin! You guys never have any fun! None of us ever has any fun. *(a pause)* It won't hurt! ... I tell you what: *(She points to MARTIN, CHRIS, and KJ respectively.)* One ... two ... three. You're one, you're two, and you're three. Give me a random number, KJ. Random 3.

KJ. On my terminal?

MARY. Yeah, random 3. *(KJ types in a command at his terminal.)* What does it say?

KJ. Two.

MARY. *(to CHRIS)* You're it, baby.

CHRIS. Oh ...

MARY. Get your jacket on and let's go. We've got a date.

MARTIN. Mary! This is my typist. I need him to work!

CHRIS. Oh, please, Martin. I've never let you down before.

MARTIN. But this is the last night!

KJ. Martin, give the kid a break. Look. I've got a cassette recorder. *(He withdraws a recorder from his desk.)* See? Why don't you just talk into the cassette tonight, and Chris can type everything in tomorrow morning.

CHRIS. Yes, that's a good idea!

KJ. It's very straightforward.

MARTIN. *(to CHRIS)* You'll come in tomorrow and type

the rest?

MARY. (*standing near the door*) This offer will not be repeated.

CHRIS. I promise, Martin. Oh, God, I promise.

KJ. Come on, you can manage with a tape recorder for one night.

MARTIN. (*with a nod*) All right.

CHRIS. Yay!

MARY. The dance hall awaits. You know how to frug, Christ?

CHRIS. Frug?

MARY. (*She takes his arm.*) Is that before your time? It's a Jamaican dance... (*MARY and CHRIS exit.*)

MARTIN. Now I've got to talk into this thing? ... (*He turns on the recorder.*) Testing, testing ... (*to himself*) How banal.

KJ. It's a simple if crusty device.

MARTIN. I don't hack simple-if-crusty devices. (*He replays his voice.*)

RECORDER. Testing ... testing...

KJ. See? The buttons determine the semantics. You don't even need a manual.

MARTIN. (*a long pause*) She looks so happy, KJ. How does anyone do that? ... What is it that she feels?

KJ. The joy of winning. It radiates.

MARTIN. I can't even pretend to feel anything ... (*Turns on the tape recorder.*) Hi, Chris. Right now, as I'm speaking this sentence, you're on your way to an evening of dining and dancing and generally enjoying yourself. Well, I envy you that ability. As for me ... ordinarily, I could finish the last five thousand words in a matter of four, five

hours. But not tonight. I don't know ... where I'm going to drag all those words from. Just... more ... blather. *(He turns off the recorder.)*

KJ. Come on, Martin. You can do it. Home stretch. Kick out, like a marathoner. You're winning.

MARTIN. Two and a half years laboring over a mirror.

KJ. A brilliant mirror.

MARTIN. *(a pause)* What are you doing now? Working on your game?

KJ. Yes. I'm including my adolescence. Very troubling time.

MARTIN. KJ, you're incredible. What'll you do when your life story gets to the point where you entered this lab? What happens when your life story catches up to last week?

KJ. I'll program myself programming myself.

MARTIN. There won't be any events.

KJ. I don't need events. My life has already spiralled upward into meta-events.

MARTIN. KJ, just for the sake of argument — what if that random number on your terminal had come up *your* number? What if it had come up three?

KJ. It did.

(KJ points to a spot on his terminal screen; MARTIN goes over to look. Lights fade.)

SCENE 8

Slides: "MAY", "THE NIGHT BEFORE — II".

The living room of MARY's apartment, shortly after 1:00 AM. Left, the front door to the apartment; right, a doorway leading offstage to the bedroom. A couple of armchairs, a small coffee table; right, a cabinet. Perhaps there is also a suitcase or two on the floor. We see CHRIS and MARY approach the front door from the hallway outside.

CHRIS. Well ... I guess this is your door.

MARY. Yes. This is my door. *(a pause)* Nice door, isn't it?

CHRIS. Yes, it's a beautiful door. *(a pause)* It's been a wonderful evening ... night ... I mean, dinner and all...

MARY. You want to come inside for a while?

CHRIS. Is that allowed?

MARY. Let me get my keys out here... *(She opens the door, both enter her apartment.)*

CHRIS. *(gazing about)* Wow ... This is a beautiful apartment.

MARY. You're not a very difficult man to please, Chris.

CHRIS. No, all this artwork ... *(looking at a piece in the imaginary "fourth wall")* Did you do that?

MARY. That's a poster of a Picasso. "Guernica".

CHRIS. Oh. Right. (*He winces to himself, privately.*) And all these books.

MARY. (*seating herself in an armchair.*) Chris, Sit-down. Relax. The apartment isn't so beautiful. I should know. I live here. (*CHRIS sits.*) I think I'm getting too old for all this activity — dining, drinking, being friendly all at once ... Did you really have a good time? At dinner?

CHRIS. Oh, yeah. You're a great conversationalist, Mary. You're almost as funny as Martin.

MARY. Thanks.

CHRIS. No, it's true. I felt kind of at ease the whole night. Usually when I talk to girls, I get so — I feel so—

MARY. Tongue-tied?

CHRIS. Yeah, but not tonight.

MARY. It's the wine.

CHRIS. Is that so?

MARY. (*nods*) You shouldn't be so shy, Chris. You have no reason to be shy. You're young, you dance well, you type fast — you've got a lot going for you.

CHRIS. (*He doesn't know what he's saying.*) I know.

MARY. Listen, you want some more wine?

CHRIS. Sure.

MARY. I don't know how good it is, but ... (*She gets up to retrieve some glasses and a bottle of wine from the cabinet nearby.*)

CHRIS. (*after a pause, indicating the doorway*) Is that another room?

MARY. (*returning, pouring out wine for the two of them*) Yeah, the bedroom. See all the suitcases? (*CHRIS nods.*) That's a

month's worth of clothing I packed. I'm going to be the best dressed computer professional in all of Czechoslovakia. A lifelong ambition realized. *(holding up her glass)* Well, what'll we drink a toast to? To chess? The Information Age?

CHRIS. Let's drink to you.

MARY. Uh ... Well, why not? To me — or better yet, to Checkmate 6. *(They sip.)*

CHRIS. And Martin's Turing program.

MARY. Yes, to Martin's Turing program. I hope it's a little more stable than he is.

CHRIS. What time is your flight?

MARY. Six PM. I have to go pick up my tickets at the triple—AI office, and then I'll stop off at Martin's Turing test, say goodbye to you guys, and then I'll get my bags and go to the airport. Comes nightfall tomorrow, I'll be heading far, far away.

CHRIS. Gee, it's a little sad ...

MARY. Why?

CHRIS. The computer room won't be the same without you.

MARY. Oh ... Sure it will. Someone'll come along and take over my machine. They'll sit down at my terminal, and the room'll be just like before. People around here are like circuit boards. Take one out, plug another in.

CHRIS. That's not true. You're unique. *(MARY looks embarrassed, and CHRIS hurries on.)* You'll come back during the summer, won't you?

MARY. Tell you the truth, I don't know. I don't know if I want a Ph.D. anymore ... We'll see.

CHRIS. Not ever?

MARY. I can't think about it now. Maybe I'll come back

CHRIS. Mary, you shouldn't leave school. It would be wrong.

MARY. Wrong?

CHRIS. (*embarrassed*) People would miss you.

MARY. That's crazy. No one would miss me.

CHRIS. Sure they would. Martin ... and KJ...

MARY. Right.

CHRIS. Everyone would. I'm sure they would.

MARY. I've been at this school too long to believe nice things about people ... (*a pause*) Chris, do you mind if I give you some advice? Just between you and me. 'Don't become a hacker. Really. Don't get into this community.

CHRIS. Why not?

MARY. It's just not a good thing to be. Hackers are insane. They're obsessive about their machines. Sometimes I go into that room and see Martin or KJ huddled over the computer and it's like looking at one ... animal, one thing. The room is dark; only their hands are moving... It's eerie. It happens to me, too. I catch myself staring at the screen for hours, and it feels like Rod Serling ought to be standing in the corner, telling everyone how I just crossed over into the Twilight Zone.

CHRIS. But it looks like fun.

MARY. It's just not a good group to be part of.

CHRIS. But you're a hacker. You're in this community.

MARY. Well, I'm leaving. Anyway, I'm *not* in it. Nobody talks to me. Nobody in the whole department talks to me.

CHRIS. That's not true. Martin and KJ talk to you.

MARY. Oh, well, they're special. They talk to anyone in that little basement. I mean the faculty, the administration — those people look away when I pass them in the halls. *(a pause)* Haven't you heard that whole story? About what happened?

CHRIS. What?

MARY. Didn't anyone tell you? ... Oh, boy. I think I need some more of that ... *(She refills her glass.)* I thought it was common knowledge ... My first year here ... *(collecting her thoughts)* See, I came here from a little college in Jamaica. In Kingston. That's my home ... And I came here to graduate school ... I was working in a lab for this professor named Clairister. This guy — you'd have to meet him to believe him — but this guy treated me like shit. He called me "girl." When I would ask a question he would say, "Go away, girl." "Busy, girl." Or sometimes he wouldn't answer at all. I would say something, ask a question, or just try to be friendly, and he would walk away without a word. He told me a few times that this place was too difficult, I should quit. Really. It was a great time ... So, anyway ... At the end of the first year, I was sitting at my terminal in the lab, typing a paper ... And Clairister comes into the room, he comes up behind me and he puts his hands on my shoulders like this *(She demonstrates on CHRIS.)* and he says to me, "Hey, baby. Let's talk about your education." Christ. I freaked. I slugged him, hard. He was down on the ground, I was screaming, "Don't you ever touch me! Don't ever touch me!" He said I tried to strangle him, but that's not true — I was banging his head on the ground. Anyway, some

people came in, they pulled me off my faculty advisor ... Didn't Martin give you this story?

CHRIS. Yeah. It was sort of vague.

MARY. That was my first year in graduate school, about three years ago. After that, no other lab would give me a position, or money; no one on the faculty would have anything to do with me ... And it's still like that. The school can't *expel* me, you see — too much of a scandal. They want me to drop out ... Does this upset you?

CHRIS. I don't know. (*a pause*) Yeah. A little.

MARY. Well I didn't drop out. Maybe now ... There's a happy ending, see, with Checkmate 6. Three years ago, right after this happened, I started thinking: what could I do, what kind of program could I write to show this whole community what a bunch of assholes they were? What could I write that would really make a splash? I decided to make a chess program — a chess program so good that no one would ever play the game anymore. Really. That's why I wrote Checkmate 6. I *hate* chess. Stupid little macho battle of brains. That's the whole point of this program. Once Checkmate 6 wins the championship, I don't believe anyone will play the game anymore. I mean, what's the point playing a game where a machine is best in the world? It's like sorting numbers as a game, you know? No one would do it. I've worked on this thing for three years. I root for that machine, so hard. Hooray for the computer! And this is just one step. It's my own small contribution. But soon, technology will replace everything. Nothing left but machines. That's what I want.

CHRIS. (*after a pause*) It's getting pretty late ... I guess I'd

better take off.

MARY. *(almost pleading)* No; stay ... You can call home, can't you? Make an excuse.

CHRIS. I could say I'm working with Martin ... Where's the phone? *(MARY gestures toward the bedroom door; CHRIS gets up quietly and goes inside. MARY follows, closes the door behind them.)*

(Lights fade.)

SCENE 9

Slides: "MAY", "THE NIGHT BEFORE — III".

The computer room, about 5:30 AM. MARTIN is alone, pacing the room very, very slowly, talking into the cassette recorder. For the first time in the play, he seems both physically and emotionally exhausted.

MARTIN. It appears that I have ... several thousand words to go. And then I'll be at the half-million mark. And if I'm the hacker everyone thinks I am, my program will work. And this LISP machine will have enough of me inside it so that no one in another room could tell us apart just by talking to us. *(to the machine)* You're almost me now. You're almost there. What do you think of me? Are we good people? Does that matter? ... Login memory. Define function human being, argument Martin de Koven. I don't know where I'm going anymore. I feel like pure disembodied information. A bunch of vague memories, and a few things that I know are true ... but they're just facts. Anything could know them. *(a pause)* There was a baseball game, softball game ... this must have been about ninth grade. I was thirteen, with the body of an eight-year-old. A sickly eight-year-old. And on this day, I got chosen last for the team, like always. I could barely lift the bat, it just made everybody laugh

when I came up. So in the last inning of the game, we were down by two runs, two out, the bases were loaded — the classical situation — and I came to the plate, trying to lift this big bat. Everyone just assumed the game was over. I had struck out, maybe, five thousand times in a row ... it must be a world record ... I had already insured a place for myself in the Hall of Nerds. So I came up there, just harmless, and the pitcher *called in the outfield*. He told them all to just stand near second base. You fucker. You fucking ... I hated him. I couldn't move. I just was ... *hurt*. I had never done anything to these people. So there was the whole team, all within thirty feet of me. I missed the first two pitches, and I was waiting for the third one and it started to come in, and all of a sudden — it was weird — the bat felt light. The ball went for a triple. It would have been a home run, but the winning run scored ahead of me, so I had to stop at third. And my team lifted me up — which wasn't very hard — and carried me all the way through the park and back to the school. And that's a fact. And if you're gonna be me, I think you better know these things. I jerk off a lot. Don't smoke. Don't do drugs. Hack. Get property list: father engineer, mother physician, brother engineer, hobbies nil, friends ... undefined. Evaluate Martin top-level, height five-five, weight a hundred twenty-five, location predicate sitting in a basement computer room without decoration, evaluating Martin level two, bright, a little strange, in tune with history, basically alone, evaluating Martin level three, proud, very proud, almost nothing else, a winner, a killer, a tiger, everything the nineteen-eighties demand, evaluating level four, tired ... level five, aware. Level six, unknown.

Maybe neurons. The little streets. With little cars zooming around. Level seven is just chemistry. The bits of the signals. A few potassium ions causing a jump in action potential. Ones and zeros. Return nil, return nil, nil... So. Evaluate function human being, argument Martin de Koven. I think I'm just depressed. I should be happy. The project is almost over. We're going to make history. I don't know why ... I think there's some kind of weird transference going on. But maybe it's healthy. I'm not sure....I think maybe it's healthy.

(The lights fade.)

SCENE 10

Slides: "MAY", "TURING TEST".

The computer room, shortly before 3:00 PM the following afternoon. MARTIN's computer has been moved over toward one side of the room, and the additional monitor and keyboard have been placed beside it. KJ and CHRIS are seen when the lights come up; KJ is checking out some of the wire connections, while CHRIS fidgets nervously.

KJ. No way.

CHRIS. It's possible.

KJ. No way.

CHRIS. He seemed upset.

KJ. I've known Martin four years, and I'm telling you what I'm telling you. No way. He'll be here and he'll see it through. Martin always finishes what he starts.

CHRIS. KJ, you should have heard the things he was saying on that tape. I've never heard Martin talk like that. Right at the end there, he was saying weird stuff. He sounded like a geek.

KJ. What time was that?

CHRIS. Maybe, like, seven AM.

KJ. *(He thinks. With finality.)* He'll be okay ... I want to check out this printer.

CHRIS. Can I go out and make a phone call?

KJ. Don't call him! He'll be here.

CHRIS. I meant Mary.

KJ. Oh. *(with less certainty)* She'll be okay too...

CHRIS. She wasn't home before. A half hour ago. I tried.

KJ. She's probably out getting drunk or something. Or maybe she went to the airport anyway, just to escape. *(brightly)* Hell of a community you've joined, isn't it, Chris?

CHRIS. I don't know ...

KJ. Artificial intelligence is an *easy* hack. What would be hard for this group is artificial sanity.

CHRIS. I'm scared about her.

KJ. Call. *(CHRIS exits. KJ strolls over to fiddle with the equipment.)*

(About ten seconds pass; then MARTIN enters, looking absolutely wretched and dishevelled.)

MARTIN. Showtime.

KJ. You dogsucker. You total bagbiter.

MARTIN. Ready to fight.

KJ. You're a putz.

MARTIN. You always know what to say.

KJ. We were worried sick. Chris tried to call you on the phone; he went up to the street to look for you...

MARTIN. I slept outside ... in the park.

KJ. Chris said you sounded bizarre on the tape.

MARTIN. I was having an identity crisis. Actually, *two* identity crises. *(He gestures toward his machine.)* One for each of me.

KJ. You want to postpone this?

MARTIN. No. I want to win it. Today.

KJ. You don't look very good.

(CHRIS enters.)

CHRIS. Martin!

MARTIN. Hi, Chris. Sorry I'm late. (noting CHRIS' expression) Don't look at me like that — I said I'm sorry!

CHRIS. That's okay...

MARTIN. (A pause. With forced cheer.) Well, I guess we better take our stations, huh, guys? Get this contest started.

CHRIS. Do you feel ... um ... good?

MARTIN. Hundred percent! All systems go! ... Where's Mary — is she coming? (The others look shocked.) Isn't Mary going to be here?

KJ. You didn't hear what happened?

CHRIS. It was in the paper this morning.

MARTIN. (answering KJ's question) No...

CHRIS. It was all over.

KJ. Didn't you see the newspaper?

MARTIN. KJ, I slept on a fucking park bench! I slept under a newspaper — I didn't read the newspaper.

KJ. Well, it happened this morning... At least that's when it was reported: Totally out-of-the-blue... (He picks up a paper and reads aloud:) "In a surprise move, the United States Chess Federation today announced the inclusion of a new rule in its charter. The new rule states, in effect, that any U.S. chess champion must be a human being."

Moreover, said the spokesman for the USCF, the rule is to be applied retroactively. This disqualifies the much-publicized Checkmate 6 computer program and its author, Miss Mary Hartleyson of Kingston, Jamaica, from participating in the upcoming world championship eliminations to be held in Prague next month." (*MARTIN takes the paper from KJ and reads.*) There's more...

MARTIN. (*reading quickly*) Disqualified... They're gonna send Jensen. That incompetent.

KJ. They sure waited till the last minute, didn't they?

CHRIS. It's not fair.

MARTIN. (*reading aloud*) "The USCF, said the spokesman, has to maintain the human spirit of chess. Chess, he said, is a human contest of mind and will..." God, what bullshit. What did Mary say?

CHRIS. She's gone. We don't know where she is.

MARTIN. (*referring to the article*) Does she even know about this?

KJ. She must.

CHRIS. I don't know. When I left her this morning at eight, she didn't know yet.

MARTIN. Chris ... you left Mary *when*?

CHRIS. At eight. In the morning.

KJ. Don't press it.

CHRIS. We didn't hear anything during the night—

MARTIN. I bet.

CHRIS. —but someone must have told her when she went to get the tickets. Right?

KJ. She *must* know.

CHRIS. Martin, I can't help worrying. She might

hurt herself.

MARTIN. Not Mary. She's more likely to hurt Jensen.

KJ. If I were him, I'd get my ass behind the Iron Curtain, pronto.

MARTIN. (*musings*) Wow. And I thought I was in bad shape.

CHRIS. Maybe we should go out and look for her. I mean, now that we found Martin...

KJ. No point. She can take care of herself. If she doesn't show up here during the afternoon, we'll try calling again. Anyway, where do you look?

CHRIS. Do you think maybe we should call the police?

KJ. Chris. Stay cool.

MARTIN. We're not her parents.

KJ. (*a pause*) Well, boys... it's after three.

MARTIN. Time to start? (*He starts doing a few "limbering up" motions.*)

CHRIS. Martin ... Are you sure you're okay?

KJ. You don't have to go through with it, you know.

MARTIN. I feel fine.

CHRIS. We could wait.

KJ. Or how about — What if we just erased the whole program right now?

CHRIS. Wait till tomorrow, Martin.

KJ. Look. I say we erase the sucker. Ten seconds of typing and it's gone. Like it never existed.

MARTIN. Two and a half years of work?

KJ. Delete it. Expunge it. Then you don't have to sleep

in the park anymore.

MARTIN. That's almost murder.

KJ. We could make it look like an accident.

CHRIS. Or suicide.

KJ. No one would ever find out. And if they did, the worst you could be charged with is involuntary manslaughter.

MARTIN. KJ, once you spend two and a half years building something, you have to see how it works.

KJ. I hope the Pentagon doesn't have your attitude. *(CHRIS sets up the folding divider in the middle of the room, isolating MARTIN's machine and the new monitor beside it. MARTIN approaches the test area.)*

CHRIS. Martin? *(MARTIN turns.)* Good luck.

MARTIN. Thank you, Chris.

KJ. Don't try to outthink it, buddy. Just go in there and be yourself. Be yourself.

MARTIN. I'll try, but I'm no expert. *(He goes to the other side of the divider, and sits down at the desk with the new terminal.)*

KJ. *(Approaches the two keyboards.)* Okay, Martin. I'm going to send a random 2 command to the machine in there. It'll set up the connections. After that, you'll either be known as "Martin number 1" or "number 2." You'll get a message on your terminal saying which Martin you are, and that's the number you'll answer to from that point on. Of course, we won't know which of you is Martin number 1 and which is Martin number 2. *(turning to CHRIS)* Here we go. *(calling again to MARTIN)* All set — put the silly red earmuffs on your head! *(MARTIN does so, as KJ turns to the downstage keyboard and types in a command.)*

st thing that comes into your head ... if you really have a head. Ready? *(The computer immediately replies.)*

Okay. It's done. (*typing at the upstage keyboard*) Hello, Martin number 1. (*MARTIN — who is now "Martin number 1" — types back a reply, which KJ reads aloud.*) "Hello." (*at the downstage keyboard*) Hello, Martin number 2. (*We see nothing, but the computer sends back a reply which comes out on the printer.*) "Hello." (*to CHRIS*) So far, they're neck and neck.

CHRIS. Can I go?

KJ. Be my guest.

CHRIS. (*Approaches "keyboard 1" and types, speaking aloud as he does so.*) Martin number 1: if you were my electric blanket and you wanted to say something in the middle of the night, what would you say?

KJ. (*Pulls CHRIS aside. Quietly.*) What is this, "The Dating Game"?

CHRIS. Yeah, that's where I got it! (*MARTIN types back an answer.*)

CHRIS. (*Runs over to read it. Reading aloud.*) "I refuse to identify with anything less than a Timex Sinclair."

KJ. Reasonable.

CHRIS. (*typing at keyboard 2*) Martin number 2: if you were my electric blanket and you wanted to say something in the middle of the night, what would you say? (*The machine sends back an answer.*) "What is this, 'The Dating Game'?"

KJ. Hmm.

CHRIS. Gee.

KJ. My turn. (*typing*) Martin number one, this is KJ. Hello. (*MARTIN types back an answer.*)

CHRIS. (*reading off the printer*) "Hi, buddy."

KJ. (*typing*) How do you feel? (*turning to CHRIS*) Little

conversation, helps loosen 'im up.

CHRIS. (*reading*) "A little less wired than usual."

KJ. (*a pensive moment; then*) Okay. (*typing*) Identify, if you will, the author of the following quotation: ... (*MARTIN immediately replies.*)

CHRIS. (*reading*) "No."

KJ. Wh—? (*typing*) What do you mean, 'no'? (*MARTIN replies.*)

CHRIS. (*reading*) "I'm busy. I'm taking a Turing test." (*to KJ*) That sounds like the kind of thing Martin would say.

KJ. But it sounds like the kind of thing a machine would *want* to say ... doesn't it? I mean, if *you* were a machine, and people kept typing stupid questions at you — add this, multiply that — wouldn't you just want to say no? Put yourself in the machine's place.

CHRIS. Sounds like high school.

KJ. (*typing*) Okay, Martin number one: get serious. Now identify the author of the following ... (*MARTIN immediately replies.*)

CHRIS. (*reading*) "Heinlein."

KJ. Heinlein ... That's right! Robert A. Heinlein! (*typing*). How did you know? (*MARTIN replies.*)

CHRIS. (*reading*) "He's the only author you've read." (*moving to the second keyboard*) I've got a good one to try.

KJ. (*a bit peeved*) That's not fair ... I've read Asimov, Harlan Ellison ... all those people.

CHRIS. (*typing*) Martin number two: I'm going to give you a bunch of words, and after each word you say the first thing that comes into your head ... if you really have a head. Ready? (*The computer immediately replies.*)

KJ. (reading) "Set"

CHRIS. (typing) No — (The computer replies.)

KJ. (reading) "Yes."

CHRIS. (still typing) Wait! (The computer replies.)

KJ. (reading) "Tables."

CHRIS. (typing) Stop!

KJ. (reading) "Go."

CHRIS. (typing) MARTIN!

KJ. (reading) "Computer." (A pause. KJ and CHRIS look at each other.)

CHRIS. (finally turning once more to the keyboard, typing) Thanks.

KJ. (reading) "Welcome." (to CHRIS) Whichever one is Martin, this is a very clever hack... Okay, enough warning up. Let's break out the big guns. (He takes several envelopes from his desk.) These are questions I got from ... (with ominous self-importance) The faculty. Real live computer scientists. Let's see ... I got this from reading Hofstadter ... (typing at the first keyboard) Martin number one: do you have any questions for Martin number two? (MARTIN replies, and KJ reads from the printer.) "Yes. Ask if he has any questions for me." Okay ... (at the second keyboard) Martin number two: do you have any questions for Martin number one? (The computer replies.) "Yes. Ask if he has any questions for me." Right. (He starts back toward the first keyboard, then pauses; to himself.) Wedged.

CHRIS. Is this what you guys call an infinite loop?

KJ. (dour) Yeah.

CHRIS. (handing him another envelope) Try this.

KJ. Let's see ... from Gunderson, huh? Okay ... (at the second keyboard, typing) Number two: "Twas brillig and the

slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe." Reply. (*The computer replies.*)

CHRIS. (*at the printer*) "That does not compute. Error 360E."

KJ. *What?*

CHRIS. We've got 'im!

KJ. (*reading from the printer*) "Error. 360E."

CHRIS. (*heading for the divider*) Well, I guess that settles it...

KJ. (*grabbing him*) No, no, no, wait. Maybe it's a trick

CHRIS. Do you think?

KJ. Look what it says. "That does not compute." (*a pause as CHRIS stares at him quizzically*) Computers don't say things like that. It's so ... (*with sudden realization*) That's from *Star Trek*.

CHRIS. Maybe it just couldn't help itself.

KJ. No, I've known Martin four years ... but I've known LISP machines five years, and they don't say things like that. And besides, if that's an error, then Martin's program has a bug, and Martin's programs don't ever have bugs.

CHRIS. I don't know ... I have the feeling we're being faked out.

KJ. Only one way to learn... (*to the second keyboard*) Martin number two: do computers really say things like "That does not compute"? (*The computer answers, and KJ reads from the printer.*) "How should I know? Ask number one — he's the computer." (*As KJ and CHRIS stare pensively, the computer adds more, which KJ reads.*) "Anyway, I was only kidding about the error." (*a pause, then more*) "And by the

way, that last question doesn't compute, *either*."

CHRIS. I think this one is Martin. Just by the sound of it. The personality:

KJ. I'm not convinced ...

CHRIS. (*referring to the first keyboard*) This one is too normal.

KJ. We've gotta get really mean. Ask something *personal*.

CHRIS. Martin's told the computer lots of personal stuff.

KJ. We've got to ask something only Martin could know ... (*to the second keyboard*) Martin number two: where did you sleep last night? (*A pause; the computer answers.*) "No fair asking questions like that." Aha! Now *that* sounds like a cop-out. An honest-to-goodness, artificially intelligent, thirty-six bit cop-out.

CHRIS. But it's cheating! It's really not a fair question.

KJ. Chris, let me tell you something. This is something my advisor, Gunderson, once said to me. He said, "KJ, in the never-ending battle between mankind and technology, every sleazy trick in the book is fair, and don't you forget it." Then he kissed me on the forehead. He's a weird guy.

CHRIS. Martin wouldn't want you to tell them apart that way.

KJ. (*at the first keyboard*) Martin number one: where did you sleep last night? (*MARTIN looks pained a moment; glances at the computer; replies.*) "No fair asking questions like that." Shit.

CHRIS. Well, it wasn't fair.

KJ. Damn!

CHRIS. *(at the second keyboard)* Martin number two; This is Chris. Hello. *(The computer replies.)* "Hello, Chris." *(typing)* Do you feel better than before? *(The computer replies.)* "Yes; I'm beginning to feel more comfortable now." *(CHRIS turns to KJ.)* See? No jokes or anything. *(typing)* We were worried about you. *(The computer replies.)* "I know, Chris. I'm sorry I worried you. You're one of my very favorite friends." *(touched)* Wow ... *(typing again)* Really? *(The computer replies.)* "Of course, Chris. I wouldn't lie."

KJ. *(at the first keyboard, growing-desperate)* Martin number one: if that's you in there, say something convincing. *(MARTIN looks anxious; he begins to pace around, frantically trying to think of something to say.)*

CHRIS. *(to KJ, referring to the computer's last reply)* That's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me. Even my parents never said I was a favorite friend. Even Mary didn't. *(typing again)* Do you think I could be a good hacker, Martin? *(The computer answers.)* "Yes, Chris. If you keep practicing LISP, I'll bet you could be a terrific hacker." *(typing)* Like you? *(The computer answers.)* "Maybe even better. But you have to work hard."

KJ. *(typing)* Say something, Martin.

CHRIS. *(to KJ)* I like this community so much, KJ. You guys are so great.

KJ. Yeah. We're a helluva bunch.

CHRIS. I want to work here. *(He turns back to the keyboard.)*

(As he does so, MARY enters behind him. Neither KJ nor CHRIS see her. She is dressed plainly, in jeans and a workshirt. Her man-

ner is unlike anything we've seen from her before: utterly without humor, without even animation. Her expression is lifeless and despairing. She is, in fact — by force of personality alone — frightening.)

CHRIS. *(typing)* I promise I'll work real hard, Martin. I want to be a hacker just like you. I want to work in this lab. *(The computer replies.)* "Good boy, Chris:" *(turning to KJ)* Isn't that — *(He sees MARY.)* wonderful? *(KJ turns, sees her.)*

MARY. "Good boy, Chris."

KJ. Where have you been?

MARY. I've been out getting an education.

CHRIS. *(almost going to her, stopping)* Are you all right?

KJ. You found out.

MARY. I had the joy of finding out with photographers present. I went to the triple—AI office to get the tickets and a gentleman in a gray suit with little tinted sunglasses said, "Oh, new rule, Mary." And then the photographers came out.

KJ. God.

MARY. It was a great scene. They just told me point-blank and then waited for me to leave. That's it. A bit of news, and now get out.

CHRIS. I'm sorry, Mary.

MARY. Are you?

CHRIS. Yes.

MARY. Didn't I have it coming?

CHRIS. No.

MARY. Anyway, I went home and changed. Then I went to the airport. The cab-driver knew who I was.

KJ. The airport?

MARY. I bought a ticket for home. *Home home. Jamaica. I'm going back tonight.*

KJ. You're quitting? Just like that?

MARY. I think I've completed my education. Maybe I don't have a degree, but I now consider myself an educated woman.

CHRIS. *(moving toward her)* Mary?

MARY. *(moving away)* Please. *(a pause)* I don't want to fight anymore. I'm tired of being angry. It makes me into a bad person, somebody I'm not. I just want to go back to my family ... Let's see what the newspapers say about that "Mary Chickens Out," or some such phrase.

CHRIS. Can't you wait, though?

MARY. I want to leave tonight. I don't want to see what I look like in those photographs tomorrow.

KJ. *(genuinely hurting for her)* Oh, my.

MARY. You know, all my life I've waited for one unambiguously good thing to happen to me. That's all. Just one truly good thing. Is that so much to ask? Nothing good ever happens to me. Why is that? Do you know? Why doesn't anything good ever happen?

KJ. I don't know.

MARY. *(to CHRIS)* Do you know? *(CHRIS shakes his head.)* Maybe Martin does. *(She walks over to the second keyboard, where she saw CHRIS typing.)* This is him? *(typing)* Martin, this is Mary. Why doesn't anything good ever happen? *(The computer pauses, replies. MARY reads silently.)* Right. See ya. *(She begins to leave.)*

CHRIS. Mary—

MARY. *(almost shouting)* Fuck off. *(She's gone.)*

CHRIS. *(Walks slowly to the printer and reads.)* "It would if you were white."

KJ. Martin wouldn't say that.

CHRIS. Maybe ... To get attention? ... I've got to talk to her. *(He runs out. KJ and MARTIN are left alone in the room, on either side of the divider. MARTIN is once more sitting at his desk, looking nervous and expectant.)*

KJ. *(Outside, paces awhile in distress; then he approaches the upstage keyboard.)* Martin number one ... *(But he has no stomach for the game anymore.)*

(CHRIS enters, dejected. He and KJ exchange a look.)

KJ. I give up. *(He steps around the divider, which CHRIS is already beginning to fold up again, and addresses MARTIN, as the latter removes his earmuffs.)* I give up.

MARTIN. God. *(He rises, walks silently out of the lab. KJ and CHRIS stare after him.)*

SCENE 11

111

Slides: "JULY", "EPILOGUE: GROWTH".

The computer room, late afternoon. CHRIS is sitting at KJ's terminal, typing. KJ is watching the screen from a distance.

CHRIS. I'm on the sofa.

KJ. Is Amy with you? *(He goes over to look at the screen over CHRIS's shoulder.)* Wow, you've gotten really far! Congratulations!

CHRIS. What do I do now?

KJ. Tell her that you like her. Just tell her plain and simple that you like her.

CHRIS. Is that what you did? In real life?

KJ. Tell her.

CHRIS. *(types)* Okay ...

KJ. See, she smiled! She's smiling at you!

CHRIS. What should I do?

KJ. Touch her on the breast.

CHRIS. But this is your first date! A blind date!

KJ. Go ahead.

CHRIS. You barely know her.

KJ. Do it.

CHRIS. *(types)* She slapped me in the face.

KJ. *(semi-proud)* Yup.

CHRIS. I'm so embarrassed. I mean, *you* are. *We* are...

KJ. But now, watch this. (*He types at the keyboard.*) I fiddle with one parameter here ... and twiddle a couple of bytes over there ... Now. Try it again. Touch her on the breast.

CHRIS. (*types*) Wow ...

KJ. See? She likes it!

CHRIS. But what really happened?

KJ. Actually, nothing. She never even let me into the house. I took her to the movies — a real good one, too: "Earth Versus the Hundred-Foot Termite."

CHRIS. Yeah, I did that.

KJ. Right. Well, I don't think Amy liked it a whole lot. So I took her home, said goodnight, she gave me a hug — not a kiss — at the door, went inside, and that was it. I never saw her again.

CHRIS. But where did you get the whole scene on the sofa? I've been on the sofa for ten minutes!

KJ. Hey, Chris. What's the use maintaining a history if you can't *tweak* it every now and then? Right?

CHRIS. Oh.

KJ. So what do you think of my senior year in high school?

CHRIS. Well ... it's more fun than ... most of your life ... I mean, as the years go...

KJ. (*a little irritated*) Yeah.

CHRIS. (*hurriedly*) I'll keep playing, though. I like it.

KJ. Okay. I'm going to go out for something to eat. You want me to bring you back any food?

CHRIS. No ... Yeah. Potato chips.

KJ. Good. So, I'll be back in a while. Listen, try and get up through my summer vacation, before college. It worked out. Good clean fun.

CHRIS. Right. (*KJ leaves. CHRIS plays awhile. Typing, then reading a response.*) Why did you slap me for that? I didn't even do anything! (*types; reads*) Her boyfriend? (*types; reads*) Her boyfriend Dominick? Oh, gosh, I'd better call this off... (*types frantically*)

(*MARTIN enters.*)

MARTIN. Hi, Chris.

CHRIS. (*astonished*) Martin! Martin! (*He runs over, shakes MARTIN's hand.*)

MARTIN. Nice seeing you.

CHRIS. Wow, it's been almost two months. Where have you been?

MARTIN. Thinking.

CHRIS. It took you that long?

MARTIN. Actually, yeah. I went back to my room two months ago after the test and turned out the lights and disconnected the phone and put on some medieval music and I started thinking.

CHRIS. Do you feel better?

MARTIN. Naah. Wiser, maybe. Maybe not even that. What're you doing?

CHRIS. Oh, I'm just ... playing KJ.

MARTIN. Playing at KJ.

CHRIS. Playing at being KJ.

MARTIN. Playing at being KJ's being.

CHRIS. Right.

MARTIN. What's your opinion of the game?

CHRIS. Well, it's ... it's ... it's weird.

MARTIN. (*with a laugh*) I always thought so, too.

CHRIS. So ... Is that what you did for two months? Just sat and thought in your room?

MARTIN. Well, y'know, I wasn't *psychotic* or anything. I didn't sit in the dark forever. I went out for meals, I read ... But basically, it was mostly thinking. Without mechanical aid — I didn't go near a keyboard the whole time. Sort of a vacation.

CHRIS. Gee, it's wonderful—you're back. We've really missed you. KJ said he thought you were in your room, but he said, "If Martin doesn't want to be bothered..." So we didn't. I began to think maybe you'd left, though. For good.

MARTIN. I'm going to.

CHRIS. (*missing this*) We left your computer and everything just the way it used to be. Nothing is changed.

MARTIN. That's nice.

CHRIS. And I've applied to school here, for the fall. KJ says I'm a shoo-in. He says the way I type, they've got to admit me. Also my grades are pretty good ... And I've been learning LISP, Martin. KJ is helping. He says I've got talent.

MARTIN. I believe it.

CHRIS. I know how to sort lists and trees, even. In alphabetical order. I'll show you. I've written a long program. Well, for *me* it's long ... three pages. I'll bet that's nothing to you.

MARTIN. No, you can do a lot in three pages.

CHRIS. KJ said that. He said that too.

MARTIN. Good going, Chris.

CHRIS. (*proud and overjoyed*) Oh, it's just a start...

MARTIN. You hear anything from Mary?

CHRIS. (*sobering up somewhat*) Yes. Yes. I sent her a few letters before she answered. She sounds okay, actually. She's working at her old college in Jamaica. Setting up a campus AI system. She says the budget is small, but the system is going to be good.

MARTIN. Bet your ass it'll be good.

CHRIS. And she's going to submit her chess program for a Ph.D. thesis. She said she'll have her degree by Christmas... Oh, Martin, it's so good you're back. It's even kind of selfish, but I'm glad you didn't graduate. Now I can't wait till school starts again. You and me and KJ — it'll be like old times. We'll all be hackers together.

MARTIN. Chris ...

CHRIS. I'll be sort of an *apprentice* hacker. But I'm learning fast.

MARTIN. Listen, Chris ...

CHRIS. I've got some big projects in mind, too.

MARTIN. That's good. It's a great step for you. But I'm not going to be here.

CHRIS. (*a pause*) You won't? You mean ever?

MARTIN. Well ... not for a long time, at least. I'm leaving. (*a pause*) See, when I was sitting in my room, thinking... It just occurred to me how unimportant I was. I'd been spending almost three years just thinking about *me* and how to program *me*... as though that meant something. It seemed disgusting after a while... I'm not sure.

Maybe this work is important, but I've been a little too brain-damaged to know. Anyway. It's complicated. I think I have to step back for a while. Find some other interest.

CHRIS. What're you going to do?

MARTIN. Oh ... I'll do what everyone does when they don't have access to computation. I'll live in the woods, eat insects, befriend a bear cub ... You know. Regular things. (*seeing CHRIS's expression*) Hey, c'mon. Don't look like that. I'll be okay. And you will, too. You're on your way. Come on.

CHRIS. Why does everyone have to leave? Mary leaves, you leave ... Why do they always have to go away?

MARTIN. Chris, you're a *hacker* now. You gotta stand like a nerd, think like a nerd. Lose height, gain weight, write equations for things. Don't be upset...

CHRIS. There won't be anyone to talk to.

MARTIN. Well, if you ever want to talk to me, you can always load up my program and talk to *it*. Right?

CHRIS. (*simply*) It won't be the same.

MARTIN. You know what I did last night? About four AM, I came in here — even KJ wasn't here. The place was totally deserted. Well, I spent about a half hour, and guess what? I transferred my whole account to you. Now, you've got an account. Anytime you write a program, you can store it on disk, under your own name. And you've got all my programs, too. They're all yours. To use whenever you want. Run 'em, study 'em, collect 'em, trade 'em with your friends. There's more than two hundred hacks there.

CHRIS. It's like a greatest hits album.

MARTIN. You bet.

CHRIS. They're all mine?

MARTIN. You study those things, you'll be the next king of hackers, Chris. Take my word.

CHRIS. Don't you think you'll ever come back?

MARTIN. Maybe, some day. Who knows. Maybe tomorrow. I've begun to place a high value on being unpredictable ... Could be you'll see me in the graduation line next year. I'm going to go out and find KJ and say goodbye.

CHRIS. Can't you stay awhile?

MARTIN. Let me show you how to log in to your account. Your login name is CHRIS. Okay? So you type "open paren - login quote CHRIS - close paren."

CHRIS. *(repeating)* Open parenthesis; login quote CHRIS; close parenthesis.

MARTIN. Then it'll ask for your password. Your password is TYPIST. Don't tell anyone that. TYPIST.

CHRIS. Right.

MARTIN. And you're all set! Program away.

CHRIS. Oh ...

MARTIN. Okay?

CHRIS. Yeah.

MARTIN. Happy hacking. *(He starts to leave.)*

CHRIS. Martin? *(MARTIN turns.)* Um ... you know ... thanks.

MARTIN. *(offhandedly)* Sure. *(He exits.)*

CHRIS. *(Alone in the lab. He looks, a little warily, at the central machine — MARTIN's old machine. He approaches the machine gingerly, then picks up the LISP manual beside it — and for a brief moment is overcome by fear. He runs to the door, calls out.)* Mar-

tin? *(No answer. Slowly, cautiously — as though approaching an imperfectly drugged tiger — he returns to the machine. Sitting down.)* Okay. Okay. Let's see ... *(typing)* Open paren, login quote Chris, close paren. *(The machine responds.)* What's my password ... *(He types.)* TYPIST ... *(The machine responds under CHRIS's gaze. He laughs — a low, throaty, slightly delinquent laugh.)* Go for it, baby! Go for it!

(The lights fade to black.)

PROPS

Light box
Bags of potato chips
Grocery bags
3 desks
4 monitors
4 computers with key boards
1 printer on moving table
5 chairs
Sofa
Assorted computer manuals (1 LISP and 1 BASIC)
Assorted books
Clock
Jacket and tie
Watches
Sofa table
Coat rack — standing
Coffee machine
Coffee cups
Book shelf (unit — standing)
Piles of scrap paper
2 bulletin boards w/dressing
Thermos
Scissors
Pencils
Pencil holders
Pens
3 robot toys

Newspapers
Magazines
Dummy mike and stand
Clip boards
Small portable chess set
Boxes of printout paper
3 winter coats
Briefcase
Lunch box
Lunch bags
Crossword puzzle
Fur coat
Change purse (squeeze kind)
Bed
Blanket
3 desk lamps
Room divider
Sunglasses
Pennant
Cassette recorder
1 extra keyboard
Woman's purse
2 suitcases
Bottle of wine
2 wine glasses
Keys
Head phones
Pliers and screwdriver
Small paint brush
Several envelopes with questions

Wire "connectors"

Boston Globe paper

Various circuit boards

Note for Martin

There was also office kinds of set dressing. This dressing was never moved, never used and was simply to establish the atmosphere of office; computer, students... these things were never listed since like paint on the walls they were really set dressing.

COSTUMES

SCENE 1 — SEPTEMBER

MARTIN

Long-sleeve stripe shirt

Corduroy pants

Leather belt

Earth shoes

White socks

Glasses

Wrist watch

White T-shirt

Plastic pocket pouch for pencils and pens

Note: this pouch for pencils is worn at all times and is permanently placed in each shirt for fast changes.

CHRIS

Button-down collar oxford long-sleeve shirt

Tie

Khaki pants

Belt

Tweed sports jacket

Tan buck shoes

Socks

Watch

KJ

Blue jeans — (worn through out entire play)

Knit T-shirt long-sleeve

Faded plaid shirt — long-sleeve

Belt

High-top black sneakers

White socks

Watch

Note: KJ keeps a pair of bedroom slippers at his desk which he occasionally wears instead of the sneakers.

SCENE 2 — OCTOBER

MARY

Rust corduroy jacket

Beige oxford button-down long-sleeve shirt

Knit tie

Skirt (wool)

Stockings

Shoes

Sleeveless sweater vest

Watch

SCENE 3 — NOVEMBER

MARTIN

Same as scene 1

Add pull-over long-sleeve sweater

KJ

Same as scene 1

Change faded plaid shirt

CHRIS

Same as scene 1

Change shirt and add sleeveless sweater
No tie

MARY

Sweater

Skirt

Scarf

Coat (exterior coat)

Boots

SCENE 4 — JANUARY

KJ

Same as before

Add long-sleeve sweater

SCENE 5 — JANUARY

MARY

Long-sleeve pink oxford shirt

Navy sleeveless sweater — button down front

Navy bow tie

Red and navy plaid pleated skirt

Shoes

Stockings

Watch

SCENE 6 — MARCH

MARTIN Complete change

Long-sleeve stripe shirt with pouch

Corduroy pants

Belt

T-shirt

Glasses
White socks
Earth shoes — same
3/4 length corduroy winter coat
Wool scarf
Gloves
Knit hat

CHRIS

Worn blue jeans
Long-sleeve shirt
Belt
Sweater
Dirty sneakers
White socks
Watch

KJ

Change T-shirt
Change plaid shirt

MARY

Black and dark green stripe silk dress
Black shoes
Dark stockings
Briefcase
Full-length light fox fur coat

*SCENE 7 — MAY**MARY*

Red knit pullover one-piece dress

Red canvas coat (contemporary)
Red stockings
Red high heels
Red canvas purse with shoulder strap
Red sun glasses
Earrings
Arm bracelet

MARTIN complete change
Lt. khaki chinos
Belt
Long-sleeve shirt w/pouch
Earth shoes — same
White socks
Glasses
Watch

KJ
Same
Change T-shirt

CHRIS
Chinos
Belt
Short-sleeve shirt
Tan bucks shoes
White socks
Informal spring jacket (khaki)
Watch

SCENE 8 — MAY

CHRIS

Same as scene 7

MARY

Same as scene 7

SCENE 9 — MAY

MARTIN

Same as scene 7

SCENE 10 — MAY

KJ

Same as scene 7

CHRIS

Same as scene 8

MARTIN

Same as scene 9

MARY

Lt. beige gabardine long-sleeve shirt

Lt. blue cotton knit top

Lt. khaki jeans

Blue espadrills

Watch

*SCENE 11 — JULY**CHRIS*

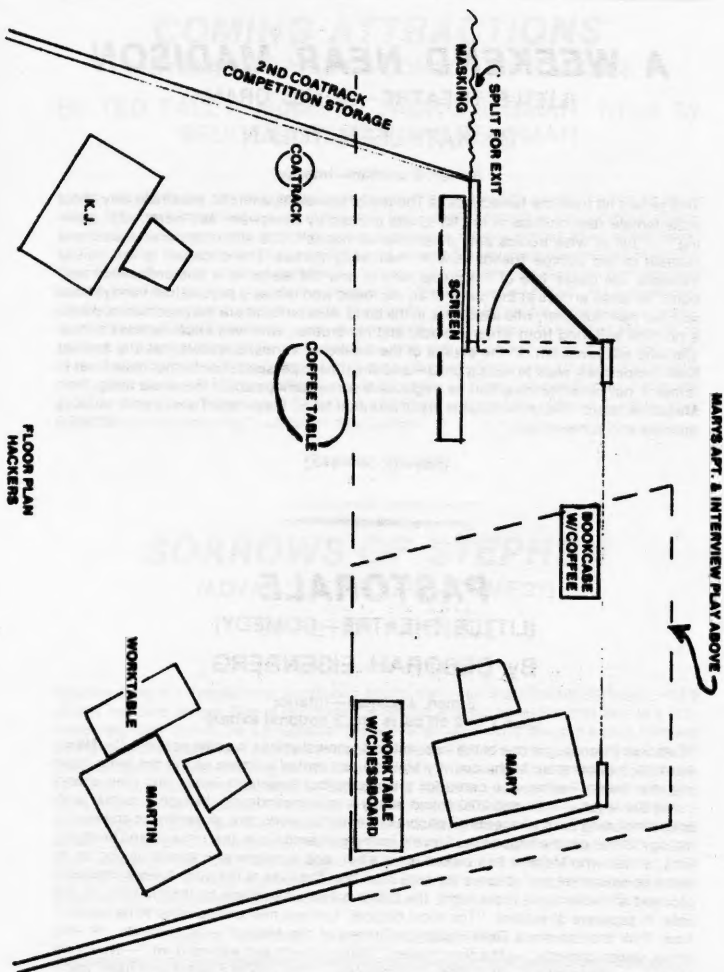
Faded dungarees
Knit short-sleeve shirt
Dirty sneakers
White socks
Belt
Watch

KJ

Same
Change T-shirt

MARTIN

(try for complete, distinct, different look)
Same khaki pants
Earth shoes — same
White socks
Red, white and blue stripe knit shirt
Blue nylon parka
Glasses
Watch





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